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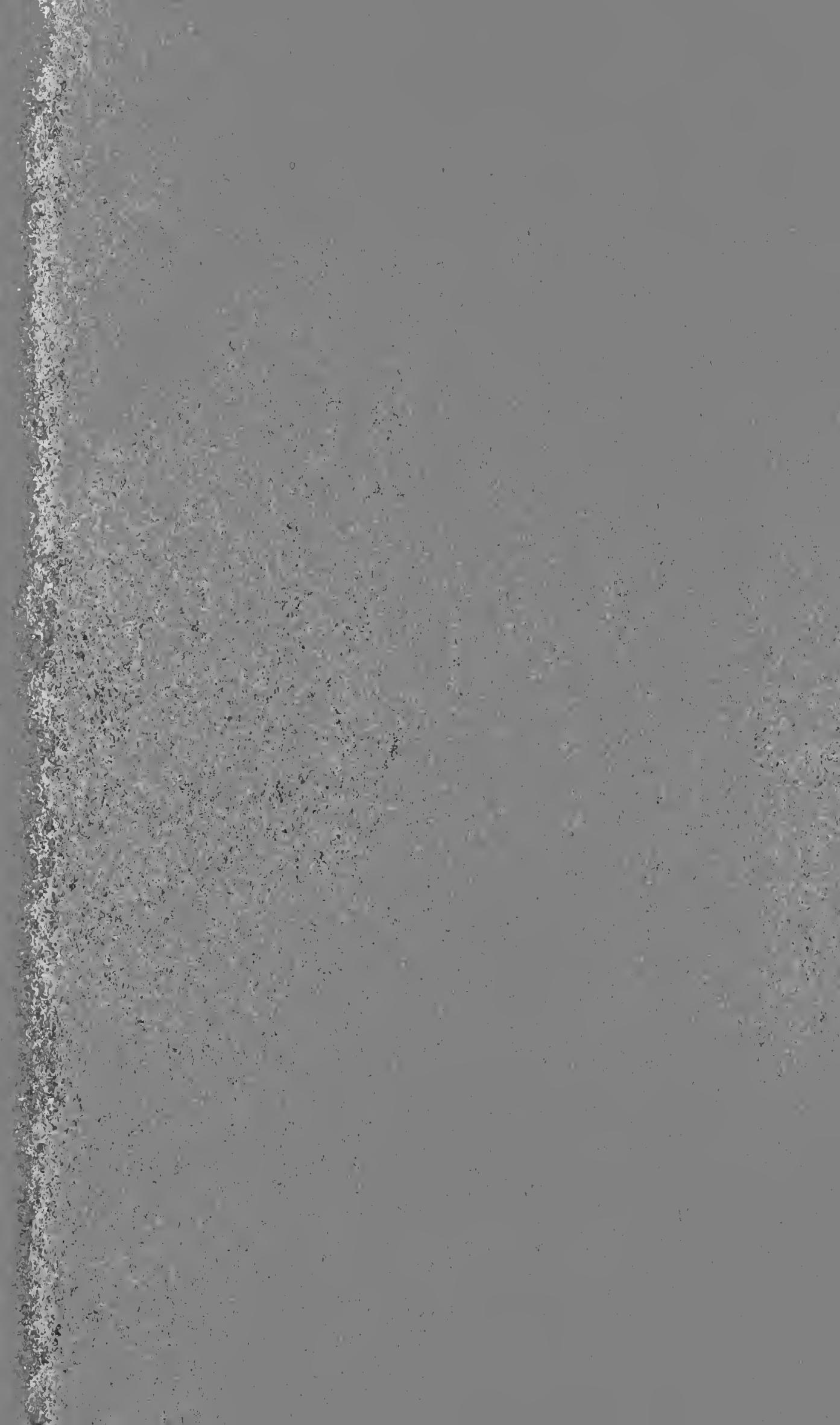
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REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

TOGETHER WITH THE

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND APPENDIX.

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed
24th March, 1908.*

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E. PONSONBY, 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

1908.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

[*Tuesday, 11th February, 1908*]:—Select Committee appointed to inquire and report as to the desirability of extending the provisions of The Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment, and of altering the limit of age prescribed by Section 2 of that Act.

The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Mr. Arthur Allen, Mr. Bright, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Gulland, Mr. John Taylor, and Mr. Power.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(Mr. Whiteley.)

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R E P O R T .

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire and report as to the desirability of extending the provisions of the INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1897, to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment, and of altering the limit of age prescribed by Section 2 of that Act:—HAVE agreed to the following REPORT:—

1. Your Committee was appointed on 11th February, to inquire “and report “as to the desirability of extending the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, “1897, to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical “payment, and of altering the limit of age prescribed by Section 2 of that Act.” They have held nine meetings, and taken the evidence of 19 witnesses from various parts of England, Scotland and Ireland.

2. A large amount of evidence has been laid before them, from witnesses speaking more or less in a representative capacity, showing the existence of many evils arising from the one-child homes being outside the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897. Illustrative cases were given of carelessness, neglect, bad treatment and cruelty.

3. On the other hand, a number of witnesses appeared who objected to the extension of the Act, 1897. It was stated by them that this would arouse great repugnance on the part of those who provide the best kind of homes, to continue to take in children, and that the difficulty of finding such homes would therefore become very great. It was suggested that in consequence of the rise in standard of living following on official inspection, increased cost must necessarily follow extension of the Act to those one-child homes. It was also urged that the effect on the parents of these children would be harmful.

See Evidence.
175, 185, 193,
209, 266, 300,
305, 573, 578,
587, 589, 814,
861, 921, 934,
1066.
666, 734, 771,
796, 802, 980,
985, 995, 1043,
1212.
677, 690, 701.
986, 1010, 1195.
666-704, 734-771.

4. In the opinion of your Committee the body of facts laid before them by those who urge the extension of the Act was not displaced by any contrary evidence. Having regard to the serious amount of evil thus brought under their notice, they recommend that the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, *should* be extended to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment.

5. They are, however, of opinion that some of the objections urged by the witnesses against extension deserve serious consideration. Your Committee believe there are a large number of these one-child cases, where the infant is received from motives of a real affection for children in general, or for some child, or parent, in particular. Where this element of a home atmosphere exists it is of vital importance that nothing should be done by Act of Parliament, or what would flow therefrom, to chill or impair it. On a careful review of this aspect of the case, your Committee are of opinion that some power should be given to the local authority to exempt, on such terms and conditions as it may think fit, any particular home in their district from inspection, or to make arrangements for any such inspection to be made by a properly constituted benevolent society if the local authority are satisfied that the interests of the child will be safeguarded.

6. Your Committee also attach the very greatest importance to the kind of inspection under the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, especially when extended as now recommended. So far as possible it should be deprived of any rigid, or formal, official character, and certainly carried out by women possessing special qualifications for the work.

7. Your Committee are in favour of raising the age to seven years.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Thursday, 13th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Bright.	
Mr. Ellis.	
Mr. John Taylor.	

Mr. Power.	
Lord Robert Cecil.	

Mr. ELLIS was called to the Chair.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned until Thursday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Thursday, 20th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. JOHN ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Bright.	
Mr. Arthur Allen.	
Mr. Gulland.	

Mr. John Taylor.	
Mr. Power.	

Mr. *Ninian Hill*, Secretary to the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Rev. *Arthur E. Gregory*, D.D., were examined.

[Adjourned until Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Tuesday, 25th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.	
Mr. Bright.	
Mr. Gulland.	

Mr. Power.	
Mr. John Taylor.	

Mr. *David Thomas*, Mr. *Robert John Parr*, and Mr. *Joseph Brown* were examined.

[Adjourned until Thursday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Thursday, 27th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.	
Lord Robert Cecil.	
Mr. Gulland.	

Mr. Power.	
Mr. John Taylor.	

Mr. *James Motion*, Miss *Frances Zanetti*, and Mr. *J. J. Simpson* were examined.

[Adjourned until Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Tuesday, 3rd March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Mr. Gulland.

Mrs. Robert Peel Wethered, the Lady St. Helier, and Miss E. H. de K. Curtis were examined.

[Adjourned till Thursday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Thursday, 5th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Mr. Gulland.

Mr. George Craighill, Miss FitzGerald-Kenney, and Miss Brodie-Hall were examined.

[Adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock.]

Tuesday, 10th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT.

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Mr. Gulland.

Mr. Bright.

Mr. John Taylor.

Lord Robert Cecil.

Mr. Power.

Dr. E. B. Turner, Miss M. H. Mason, Mr. James Courtenay Doyle, and the Rev. E. Bans were examined.

[Adjourned till Thursday next, at Twelve o'clock.]

Thursday, 12th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. ELLIS in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Mr. Gulland.

Mr. Bright.

Mr. Power.

Lord Robert Cecil.

Mr. John Taylor.

Mr. James Ollis was examined.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned until Tuesday, March 24th, at Twelve o'clock.]

Tuesday, 24th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Ellis in the Chair.

Mr. Arthur Allen.
Mr. Bright.

Mr. Gulland.
Mr. Power.

DRAFT REPORT, proposed by the *Chairman*, brought up and read the first time as follows :

1. Your Committee was appointed on 11th February, to inquire "and report as to the desirability of extending the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment, and of altering the limit of age prescribed by Section 2 of that Act." They have held nine meetings, and taken the evidence of 19 witnesses.

2. A body of evidence has been laid before them, from witnesses speaking more or less in representative capacity, showing the existence of many evils arising from the one-child homes being outside the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897. Illustrative cases were given of carelessness, neglect, bad treatment and cruelty.

3. On the other hand, a number of witnesses appeared who objected to the extension of the Act, 1897. It was stated by them that this would arouse great repugnance on the part of those who provide the best kind of homes, to continue to take in children, and that the difficulty of finding such homes would therefore become very great. It was suggested that in consequence of the rise in standard of living following on official inspection, increased cost must necessarily follow extension of the Act to those one-child homes. It was also urged that the effect on the parents of these children would be harmful.

4. In the opinion of your Committee the body of facts laid before them by those who urge the extension of the Act was not displaced by any contrary evidence. Having regard to the serious amount of evil thus brought under their notice, they recommend that the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, *should* be extended to homes in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment.

5. They are, however, of opinion that some of the objections urged by the witnesses against extension deserve serious consideration. Your Committee believe there are a large number of these one-child cases, where the infant is received from motives of a real affection for children in general, or for some child, or parent, in particular. Where this element of a home atmosphere exists—the only true basis for a successful boarding-out system—it is of vital importance that nothing should be done by Act of Parliament, or what would flow therefrom, to chill or impair it. On a careful review of this aspect of the case, your Committee are of opinion that some power should be given to the local authority to exempt, on such terms and conditions as it may think fit, any particular home in their district from inspection.

6. Your Committee also attach the very greatest importance to the kind of inspection under the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, especially when extended as now recommended. So far as possible it should be deprived of any rigid, or formal, official character, and certainly carried out by women possessing special qualifications for the work.

7. The evidence before your Committee, with respect to the raising of the age-limit, was not of such a character as to make this a matter of great importance. On the whole, your Committee are in favour of it.

Question, That the Draft Report proposed by the Chairman be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph,—put, and *agreed to*.

Paragraph 1.

Amendment made at the end of the paragraph by adding the words "from various parts of England, Scotland and Ireland."

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to*.

Paragraph 2 amended, and *agreed to*.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 *agreed to*.

Paragraph 5.

Amendment made in lines 4 and 5 by leaving out the words "the only true basis for a successful boarding-out system."

Another Amendment made at the end of the Paragraph by adding the words "or to make arrangements for any such inspection to be made by a properly constituted benevolent Society, if the local authority are satisfied that the interests of the child will be safeguarded."

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to.*

Paragraph 6 *agreed to.*

Paragraph 7.

An Amendment made by leaving out all the words from the beginning of the Paragraph to the word "whole" in line 2.

Another Amendment made at the end of the Paragraph by leaving out the word "it," and inserting the words "raising the age to seven years" instead thereof.

Paragraph, as amended, *agreed to.*

Question, That the Report as amended be the Report of the Committee to the House,—put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, To Report together with the Minutes of Evidence and an Appendix.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

Thursday, 20th February, 1908.

	PAGE
Mr. Ninian Hill	1
Rev. Arthur E. Gregory, D.D.	5

Tuesday, 25th February, 1908.

Thursday, 27th February, 1908.

Mr. James Russell Motion - 23
Miss Frances Zanetti - 27
Mr. Jesse James Simpson - 33

Tuesday, 3rd March, 1908.

Thursday, 5th March, 1908.

Tuesday, 10th March, 1908.

Thursday, 12th March, 1908.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Thursday, 20th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.
Mr. Bright.
Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Gulland.
Mr. Power.
Mr. John Taylor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. NINIAN HILL called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1. You are, I think, the General Secretary of the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ?—Yes.

2. Have you read the terms of reference to this Committee ?—Yes.

3. You will see that our points are very limited ; you will bear that in mind, of course, in your evidence. We are not going over the whole field, but only into two points ?—I quite understand.

4. In the first place, I should like to ask you does your Society cover the whole of Scotland ?—Yes.

5. You are here as the representative of that Society, and by their authority ?—Yes, I am here officially.

6. Now, will you lay before us what you desire to say ?—The first point I would mention is, that in the experience of our Society, the cases where only one child is adopted in a family are more numerous than cases where two or more children are adopted in a family. We find adoption very frequent amongst the working-classes. It is difficult to account for the readiness with which they assume the responsibility, but the motives, so far as one can judge, are, first, a desire for company ; they seem to adopt children much in the same way as people in another class of society adopt cats and dogs and parrots. Then in the second place, they seem to do it in a not altogether professional manner ; they do it more to supplement their living than to make a living wholly out of the practice. Looking over the cases that we dealt with in Edinburgh last year,—that is, cases of neglect amongst children who had been adopted,—I find that out of eight such cases five were cases where only one child was kept, and in Glasgow during 1907, out of 18 such cases 14 were cases where only one child was kept.

7. As you are now dealing with figures, I think it would be convenient if you would let the Committee know the total number of cases with which your Society has dealt during the last few years. Can you tell us for 1905, 1906 and 1907, how many cases you dealt with ?—We do not keep statistics

Chairman—continued.

of the baby-farming cases. I have gone specially over our Edinburgh and Glasgow cases in order to get these figures.

8. Then you cannot answer my question except to that extent, that you do not keep figures ?—No. We keep figures of all our cases, but not specially of baby farming cases. Then my next point is that one-child cases, that is to say, cases where only one child is kept, do not attract the attention of neighbours in the same way as when there are two or more adopted children, and they are therefore more liable to be neglected. I mean by that, that where a woman is known to be a baby farmer the eyes of her neighbours are directed to all that goes on in that household ; it is a notorious household in the locality. On the other hand, a woman may receive one child and it may escape the notice of the neighbours. We had a case in Edinburgh in the year 1906 where a child was born in a certain house on the 28th of May ; it was reported to us as being neglected on the 16th of February following, that is nine months afterwards. Our Inspector reported : “ I made inquiries to-day among the neighbours, and there is only one neighbour there that had any knowledge of Mrs. S. having this adopted child, they all seemed much surprised when I spoke about Mrs. S. having this child, and them never to know anything about the child.” A neighbour residing in the same house, the same land, to use our Scottish expression, stated that she did not know anything about this child. Therefore, our point is, that a case of one child adopted instead of requiring less supervision is sometimes really in a more dangerous position and requires more supervision than cases where there are two or more children in the baby farm. Then I come to the next point which I wish to draw attention to, and that is that periodical payments are very uncertain. We have frequently cases where a periodical payment is promised when the child is handed over ; a few payments are made and the parent disappears, and no further payments are forthcoming. In such cases, of course, the guardian hands the child over to the parish ; in

20 February, 1908.]

Mr. NINIAN HILL.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

other cases, which are not infrequent, by that time the guardian has become attached to the child and keeps it without payment. I am assuming, of course, that in a great many cases adoption turns out well. I believe that it is only in exceptional cases that adopted children are neglected and seriously imperilled. We have had one or two cases of this nature recently. In a case that was tried in Edinburgh our Inspector gave evidence to the effect that he had visited the house, and stated the prisoner explained that the mother of the neglected child was working in a laundry in the City. Later, however, the prisoner stated that the child had been adopted, and after the first payment of 5s. the mother had gone off to Canada. In another case, in Glasgow, the father of the child promised to pay 5s. a week for the support of his child; at the date of the report he had not paid anything for nine weeks. In another case in Glasgow, the people who adopted the child had no family of their own, and took the child to nurse; the mother had paid for it for five months, and since then she had been lost sight of.

9. Those, I take it, are illustrative cases?—Those are illustrative cases.

10. Could you multiply those cases?—We do not have a great many cases of this kind in the course of the year.

11. I am anxious rather to get you to say definitely. A great many, may mean anything or nothing. You have not any figures?—I have given you these figures. In Edinburgh we had only eight cases of neglected adopted children last year; in Glasgow we had 18. Then the practical outcome of these cases so far as the reference to the Committee is concerned, is that when the periodical payments stop, and the parents disappear, the child is then in exactly the same position as one for which a premium has been paid; in both cases alike, the guardian has no expectation of getting any more money. If, as the law admits, the one is thereby exposed to danger and requires to be registered, so is the other, and it ought equally to have the same protection. I think I might go further, and say it really requires more protection, because in a case where persons take a child for a premium they know there and then that they have nothing more to expect for it; but when they take a child on the understanding that they are to get a periodical payment, and they find that the periodical payment stops, and the parent has disappeared, they feel naturally that they have been "done," and therefore it is possible to conceive that they might vent their displeasure on the hapless infant. The Society also think that if there were no exceptions the administration of the Act would be more efficient.

12. You mean, if the one child system were brought within the range of the law?—Yes.

13. Do you adopt those words—I do not want to put any words in your mouth?—Quite so, that is entirely my point. My point is that the exception of the one child cases confuses the public mind, and the idea gets abroad that if there is only one child they do not need to register; whereas if there was no exception, these children would be more generally reported than they are.

Chairman—continued.

14. Your evidence so far has been limited to the one child case, of course?—Yes.

15. Then I may take it that you answer the question put to us in this way; you say that it is desirable to extend the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to homes in which not more than one child is kept?—That is so.

16. Now what have you to say as regards the limit of age?—My Society think that the age of five years is too low, and that it might be raised with advantage to the age of seven years. My Society take the view that a child of seven comes more effectively under the supervision of the School Board Officer than a child of five, and if the age were raised to seven, that would ensure that the children referred to in the Act here would be under the effective supervision of either one or other of these public authorities from the time of their adoption, until they had passed beyond school age. I think that is about the only point that I have to mention in connection with the raising of the age, but we certainly think that the age should be raised to seven years.

17. Now one word more, before your examination-in-chief finishes, as to your authority. You have come before us as the representative and by the authority of your Society, and we may take it that that Society covers the whole of Scotland, I presume?—It covers the whole of Scotland with the exception of Dundee. The only other Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children working in Scotland is a local society at Dundee. Otherwise our Society covers the whole of Scotland from Wick in the extreme north, to Stranraer in the extreme south.

18. Therefore, if I may so put it, yours is the Scottish view of the question?—I hope so.

19. You have no reason to suppose otherwise?—None whatever.

20. As you know, in these philanthropic matters one often finds many currents running, and some people write to the Committee and say, so and so does not represent Scotland, may we be heard. You have no idea that that will occur in this case?—We act under the properly constituted General Council which represents all our Branch Committees, and the Executive which is appointed by this General Council. The Children's Bill has been in the charge of a Sub-Committee which has been appointed by the Executive. I think you may take it that the views I have expressed would be homologated by the Society.

Mr. Bright.

21. Do you think that if it were necessary that people taking in single nurse children should be registered there would be any reluctance on the part of respectable people to take children?—I do not think so. These people are accustomed to visits from all sorts of Inspectors, and I have no reason to suppose that there would be any resentment on the part of respectable people; they would have nothing to fear; if the Inspector was a proper man it would be done in a proper manner.

22. Of course you will admit that there are two classes of adoption. There is one class of adoption—genuine adoption by childless people who wish for a child to bring up as their own; and then there is, is there not, the case of a person who takes a child

20 February, 1908.]

Mr. NINIAN HILL.

[Continued.]

Mr. Bright—continued.

child in purely as a business matter?—Yes, our experience is that the people who take in children purely as a business matter are very few compared with the number of those who take in children in a sort of semi-professional way to supplement their income or just simply for company. We had a case in Leith a few weeks ago where a charwoman earning 10s. a week had adopted some years ago a little boy when he was only one year of age. The people regard these cases very much in this sort of way. They say the child's bite will never be missed, and they take him in and keep him, and the child grows up into a hungry schoolboy, and it gets a different matter.

23. Was this a case of cruelty?—It was not a serious case. Somebody had seen the child wandering about with a ragged, uncared-for appearance, and inquiry was made into the circumstance, and it was found that this charwoman was out working and she had adopted this child when a year old.

24. What I wanted more particularly to get from you was whether you thought the enforcing of inspection of these children would destroy the kindly custom of taking children in more to be treated as their own children by people who want children?—I should not anticipate that. I have no reason to think so.

Mr. Gulland.

25. Your Society is quite separate from the English one, is it not?—Yes, we have no connection whatever with the English Society.

26. And you have branches and agents all over Scotland?—Yes.

27. And you yourself are visiting round the branches?—Yes.

28. So that in that way you are in touch with the opinion on this subject?—That is so; it is my duty to inspect the work which the Inspectors are doing.

29. Have you come across in your visitation and in your conversations any people who are against the inclusion of one-child homes?—No, I know no one opposed to it.

30. And you have, I know, taken part in many other branches of philanthropic work in previous years before you joined the Society; have you found there any objection to such inclusion?—No, I never heard any objection at all.

31. Of course, at present your Society comes across these cases only casually?—That is so; when a case is reported to us. Sometimes a neighbour will hear of a case of this sort and send us word; sometimes our Inspectors in the course of their visitation, or in course of patrolling the streets, come across cases of this sort. We get information about cases in all sorts of ways.

32. You rather suggested that at present the administration was not efficient, but would be made more efficient by the inclusion of one-child homes. Do you mean by that, that not only are there other points upon which the law is deficient, but that it would require the inclusion of one-child homes to make the law thoroughly efficient so that you might be quite sure that no cases slipped through?—I think so. It is difficult to find out the exact circumstances under which a child has been adopted or taken charge of by

C

Mr. Gulland—continued.

guardians. Of course it is no part of our duty. Our duty is to prevent cruelty to children, and unless any special circumstances call for it, perhaps our Inspectors do not make very particular inquiries as to the terms upon which a child has been received. Then even if they did get a statement from the guardian, we have no means of verifying it beyond the guardian's word for it.

33. Are there any statistics published as to the number of registrations under the 1897 Act in the hands of Parish Councils?—The Parish Councils are the authority for administering the Act, but I have no statistics of the number of cases that are reported to them.

34. You do not, for instance, know the statistics of the Edinburgh Parish Council?—No.

35. If I told you that since the passing of the Act of 1897 the Edinburgh Parish Council had only 28 homes for the reception of children registered, and there were only four or five prosecutions by them, would you think that was a small number?—I should think it was a very small number, judging by the amount of this sort of thing that goes on.

36. Do you think on that basis that the Act has not been enforced, owing to the defect that you are pressing upon us, so efficiently as it might be?—Twenty-four cases in 11 years seems to me a very small proportion of cases, that I should fancy must have existed.

37. The point I want to put to you now is this: Do you study the advertisements in the papers for these cases?—Not habitually, but I have sometimes looked at the advertisements.

38. I see in the evidence of the late Chief Constable Henderson at the last Inquiry, he put in some test advertisements. Have you ever done that?—I put in an advertisement once for a respectable party wanted to adopt a healthy male child with a premium, in order to try and get evidence on a certain case, and we had about 20 answers, I think, to that advertisement.

39. Did you follow it up at all?—No, we did not get the answer we expected.

40. So you left them?—Yes.

41. You said in reply to the Chairman or to Mr. Bright, that the people in Scotland were accustomed to be licensed and inspected. There are many things, are there not, perhaps more than in England, for which a licence is required by law, and is got in quite a pleasant way?—There are sanitary inspectors who come round and School Board Officers who come round, and lodging house inspectors. In big cities, the lodging house inspectors come round in the middle of the night, and turn everyone out of bed to see how many lodgers there are in the house.

42. The people are not averse to inspection if they know that they are doing right?—No, I do not think so. I may say that I have been surprised at the indifferent, if not even kindly, way in which our inspectors are received upon their visits; it is the rarest possible thing that our inspectors going round to make what might be thought very impertinent, even very libellous inquiries, meet with any resentment. I have been perfectly astonished at the general welcome they get; there is no evidence whatever of any resentment.

2*

43. Then

20 February, 1908.]

Mr. NINIAN HILL.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

43. Then in any of these cases of adoptions where there is a single child adopted, are they adopted into families where there are already children?—Sometimes.

44. So that although only one child is adopted there may be more than one child in the house?—Yes. In one of these cases that I have quoted, there were three children in the family, one aged nine, another four, and a third two, and yet they adopted another child.

45. Was your case against them for cruelty to the child they had adopted, or one of the others?—It was neglect specially against this adopted child, but the other children were found, I think, in a bad condition too; the whole family was in a bad condition, but the youngest, this adopted infant, was in a specially deplorable condition.

46. So that although there is only one child adopted, yet there may be many children in the house, and there may be cruelty going on?—Yes, that is so.

47. I see Chief Constable Henderson in his evidence, which I have already alluded to, talked about the notorious case in Scotland of Jessie King, who was condemned for murder, for baby farming; do you remember that case?—No, that was before my time.

48. The only other question I want to put to you is about the age. You said that you would prefer the age to be raised to seven. Is it not a fact that the compulsory age for school is five?—That is so, but a child of five, I am informed, can very easily escape the necessity of going to school. It is very small in the first instance, and a doctor's certificate is very easily got that it is weak and not sufficiently advanced to go to school. I am informed that school age cannot be said to begin effectively at the age of five years.

49. They do not press them to go to school till six?—No, but if there is a child known about of seven years of age, the School Board officer is on its track at once.

50. One other question about towns and country. These cases that you speak of are mostly adopted in towns, are they?—Yes. I may say that I had very short notice about this examination to-day, and I have not had the opportunity of consulting our country branches.

Mr. John Taylor.

51. Are there any figures which would give us the number of people who adopt one child in a semi-professional capacity?—I do not think so, unless the Parish Council has any such figures.

52. Are there any figures as to what might be termed genuine adoptions?—It would be very difficult to draw the line.

Chairman.

53. I gather that that is not within the purview of your Society?—No, we only deal with cases where there is neglect or cruelty.

Mr. John Taylor.

54. Can you tell us at all the number of objections that you have received to inspection by these people, if any?—Of course, we are not the authority under this Act. If we get a complaint that a certain child is being neglected, we go and make inquiries; but, as I say, our

Mr. John Taylor—continued.

inquiries, as a rule, are generally well received and not resented.

Mr. Power.

55. I presume that your evidence applies nearly altogether to illegitimate children?—I should think so; I may say largely.

56. I had not the advantage of hearing you (it was my own fault) from the beginning, and I am comparatively ignorant on the subject; but might I ask how are these children put out to nurse as a rule? Is it by Boards of Guardians, or by the mothers?—Doubtless it is done in both cases. The Board of Guardians (that is, the Parish Council in Scotland) get children landed upon them, and instead of keeping them in the workhouse, they board them out; but a great many cases are cases of a young woman having an illegitimate child. Sometimes she goes into a nursing home of a midwife, and the nurse who is attending her undertakes to dispose of the child. “Give me a £5 or a £10 note and I will find a home for the child.” There are a good many cases of that sort.

57. So that, as a rule, many of these children are put out to nurse when they want either breast feeding or bottle feeding?—I do not think one could draw any distinction about that; I do not think that is a factor in the question.

58. So far as Boards of Guardians and public bodies in the part of the country you are acquainted with are concerned, I suppose they generally, in fact always, endeavour to put out children with people belonging to the creed to which the mother belongs?—Yes, any public authority would certainly make a point of doing that. Of course, in the case of these mid-wives and baby brokers and answerers of advertisements, there is not a great deal of religion about them.

59. I only wanted to inquire, because so far as we are concerned in Ireland we always make a point of doing that. Do you know cases in which the children become so attached to these people who bring them up that they actually adopt the names of their foster-parents?—I have no evidence on that point.

60. I would like to have your views with regard to the main objection to visiting these one-child cases. We have had a document presented to us signed by some influential people objecting strongly to that—not from Scotland. What are your views with regard to that?—I only heard about it this morning, and I was rather surprised to hear about it.

61. You prefer not to express an opinion upon the subject?—I do not really quite understand the grounds of the objection. I have just had the paper placed in my hands immediately before coming here, and I have not had time to study it, but I have not heard any opinion against this proposal expressed in Scotland.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

62. Your Society would only have to do with cases of adoption in which cruelty had taken place?—That is so.

63. That is to say, you would only have to do with quite a small proportion of the whole number of adoptions?—I should think so.

64. I notice

20 February, 1908.]

Mr. NINIAN HILL.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

64. I notice that you said in your evidence-in-chief that the main thing for which these children are adopted was not desire for gain, but desire for company?—And to supplement the family income in most cases.

65. But the desire for company would be present as a rule in the cases that come within your purview, would it?—Yes, I think so.

66. You do, in fact, then get the better class homes within your notice, as well as the worst class?—Yes.

67. Do you find cruelty in the better-class homes?—Not as a rule. We find cruelty and neglect sometimes in families which ought to be in comfortable circumstances.

68. And you would say, from your experience in Scotland, that you do not think that the families who adopt for the sake of company, and for the sake of making a real adoption, would object to inspection?—No, I do not think so.

69. There is one other point on the question of age. Surely, from the age of five, the school officer would be coming round, would he not?—That is so, but my point was that five years of age is a very narrow margin; a child might be small, and the School Board Officer might not take special notice of it, but by raising the age to seven, you would insure that when the School Board Officer came round, the child did not escape his observation.

70. But, in fact, a child of five would be inquired into by the School Board Officer, would he not?—If he knew about it.

71. And a doctor's certificate, if that were necessary, would be drawing the attention of some independent person to the child. You said that a doctor's certificate would prevent the child having to attend school?—In the case of a weakly, backward, delicate child a certificate could be got from a doctor, saying that attendance at school might be injurious to its health.

72. My point is that if you got a doctor in you would thereby get an independent person, and that would be sufficient protection for the child?—Yes, but that is presuming that the child had been discovered by the School Board Officer. My point was rather that a child of five might escape the observation of the School Board Officer; a child of seven could not easily escape the observation of the School Board Officer.

Mr. Power.

73. At present, is there no supervision with regard to a single child in a home?—There is no supervision for a child under five years of age that is received for a periodical payment. There is supervision, or supposed to be super-

Mr. Power—continued.

vision—at any rate, the cases come under the Act where a child under two years of age has been received for a lump sum.

Chairman.

74. Those are the provisions of the Act?—Those are the provisions of the 1897 Act, and my point was that these two provisions confused the public mind, and that if that distinction was done away with, the administration of the Act would be simpler and thus become more efficient.

Mr. Power.

75. I presume that only in cases of reported hardship and so forth, do these cases come under your notice?—That is so; they just come to us in the ordinary way of business. We hear of a neglected child, we go and inquire, and then find out whether it is adopted or not.

76. Is it the duty of the Relieving Officer to visit these cases when they are put out by the Guardians at periodical times?—No. Not so far as I am aware.

77. And no one visits them?—The provisions of the Act are that if anyone receives two or more children under the age of five for periodical payment, they must give notice of that to the local authority. Then the local authority is supposed to visit, and see whether that is a proper home. If there is no objection taken to it, the thing is all right.

78. But there is not any inspection when once the child goes there?—I do not think there is any practice of regular inspection, when the local authority have satisfied themselves that the house is satisfactory.

Mr. Gulland.

79. I do not think we have had any question put about this. Is there any difficulty about a particular woman taking a child on particular terms, and conforming with the law, and then passing the child on to somebody where it is treated wrongly—a sort of sub-letting of children?—Yes, we have come across cases where, for example, a child has been adopted for £10, and the woman has passed it on to somebody else, say for £5, and the £5 woman has passed it on to somebody else for £1. I might mention that the provision in the 1897 Act in Clause 5, as to premium payments, could be most easily evaded by drawing up a document, agreeing to pay these premiums over and over again, when it could be perfectly well understood between the parties that only one payment was to be made. It would then appear as a periodical payment, whereas really only one payment would ever be made.

(The Witness withdrew.)

The Reverend ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

80. You are the Principal, I think, of the Children's Home and Orphanage, which has its chief office in Bonner Road, London?—Yes.

81. Can you give us, in the first place, some idea as to the scope of the operations of your Insti-

Chairman—continued.

tution?—Our Institution has been established for nearly 40 years. We deal with children of all classes. We have 11 established branches, one in Canada, one in the Isle of Man, and nine in this country. We also board out a considerable number

20 February, 1908.]

REV. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

number of children, and an increasing number of children.

82. Can you give us the number of children in your Orphanage?—The number is between 1,900 and 2,000. Until the end of the month I never know just the exact number, but it is between 1,900 and 2,000.

83. Are they drawn from all parts of the United Kingdom, or from any particular area?—From all parts of the United Kingdom and a few from abroad, but they are a negligible quantity—English children who have got into difficulties abroad for the most part.

84. Does that 1,900 or 2,000 represent the figure at which the number has stood for some time, or is it the maximum at the moment?—It is the number at the present time. We increase our community at the rate of from 100 to 150 every year.

85. How long have you had your attention called to this matter of boarding-out?—I became officially connected with this work, though I had been on the Committee many years before, 10 or 11 years ago. Canon Barnett wrote to me, and asked me to see him on this question. I had not given any special attention to it up to that time (my work had been on quite different lines), and I was greatly impressed by what Canon Barnett said to me. I appointed an inspector at once, the head of one of our children's hospitals, to visit the boarded-out children and report to me as to the small boarding-out arrangements we had at that time. I found that the boarding-out was admirable. I had not been in favour of it—in a general way I had a little prejudice against it until I had inquired into it—but there is no man who advocates boarding-out for little children more warmly than I do now.

86. You bear in mind, of course, as did the previous Witness, that our terms of reference are limited, and we are anxious to have your opinion on that one point?—Yes, I quite understand the limit.

87. Is your Institution connected with any particular religious denomination?—We are chiefly connected with the Methodist Churches, but we are not purely so. We have representatives of various denominations upon our different committees. We have a large general committee, and the local branches in Lancashire, near Birmingham, and so on, and one in the Isle of Man, have local committees also.

88. Perhaps now you will go on with your *précis* under Head 2, and just give us what you wish to lay before us?—My experience of boarded-out children falls into two sections. The first includes the cases that we have ourselves boarded out. I have myself been responsible for boarding out over 1,000 children. Of these I can say nothing but good; it is a most unusual thing to find that a child is placed in an unsuitable home. On the other hand, we have a large experience of applications to receive children from houses in which they are improperly boarded-out. Some of the very worst cases that have ever come before my notice, the most sadly neglected, appallingly crippled and diseased children, have come from homes where they have been boarded out by their

Chairman—continued.

parents unsuitably. I can give many illustrations of such cases. I have only put a few down here, but my secretary got me out 100 such cases from our register in an hour or two. Cases of this kind: A child of 18 months; the Visitor's report was, "boarded-out with people who drink, and teach the child to drink." Second case: "Habitually ill-treated and starved." Those have not come before the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; they are cases which had not come to the point at which that Society takes them up.

89. They had not come within the ambit of cruelty, whatever it was?—They did not come within the point at which it would be wise to prosecute. You must remember that there are a great many cases in which cruelty is absolutely certain, but in which you could not ensure a conviction, and the Society very judiciously does not like to prosecute unless it is pretty sure of conviction. The Committee will know that there has been a great deal of criticism of that Society which has hampered its work. I have no official connection with the Society, although I co-operate with it. There are many cases which come to a Society like ours which do not go to a Society like that.

90. What is your channel of information as to those cases?—Our channel of information is largely the Police Court missionaries, from whom we get a number of applications, the district visitors and clergy of all denominations, and, in connection with the Wesleyan Church—I am a Wesleyan minister—the large central missions which we have in the great towns, and which make an immense number of applications to me. I think I may say that we cover the whole country by agents who are not officially employed by us but are in close touch with us. It is, of course, true that a number of these children are illegitimate, but by no means all the children boarded-out are illegitimate. They are the children of widowers; the children of men who have drunken or insane wives; they are the children of widows or deserted wives who are in situations where they cannot have the child; and whilst you do not find many cases—I do not find many cases—of deliberate cruelty amongst the legitimate children boarded-out, I find a great many cases of grave carelessness, neglect and bad feeding. The foster-parents of the poorer type take them for 1s. or 2s. a week; I have known as little as 1s. and 1s. 6d. paid irregularly, but it is enough to attract the poorer foster-parents that there is so much cash coming in, and they trust that they will muddle through.

Mr. Bright.

91. Legitimate children?—Yes, legitimate, as well as illegitimate. Some of the worst cases I have seen are legitimate children. I remember one case of a railway porter whose children were on the verge of death, when they came to us, purely through the stupidity—not intentional cruelty, but neglect and bad feeding—of the foster-mother.

20 February, 1908.]

Rev. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

[Continued.]

Chairman.

92. All this is leading up to a conclusion, I suppose?—It is. My next point would be that whilst societies, institutions and Boards of Guardians can always secure good homes, and have no difficulty with the question of inspection—I cannot speak so positively of Boards of Guardians, but institutions have no difficulty in regard to inspection—the parents cannot. If it is a widower or widow, and especially if it is an unmarried mother, they are driven to do whatever they can, to put the child with anyone who will take it. Perhaps the Committee would allow me to say that my signature is appended to that Memorial to Mr. Samuel, which, I believe, you referred to as not being before you officially.

93. For the moment?—I wrote to Mr. Samuel, and explained to him that my signature was appended quite by an oversight, and I withdrew it immediately, because I do not hold the view of the memorialists. I believe that is the case with others signatories.

94. We shall have to deal with that hereafter. We are very much obliged to you?—You understand that I have withdrawn.

95. We will cancel your signature?—If you please. My strong conviction is that a wisely administered system of inspection of homes in which these little children are placed would give parents an opportunity, which they would greatly prize, of putting the children into good homes. I have no doubt that in a short time the fear that a woman who takes one child to care for, and looks well after it, may be called a “baby farmer,” will pass away. It is a most offensive term, used in speeches and so on by representatives of philanthropy; but it is a most unjust phrase, and I believe registration would help to abolish it. Then I think that inspection should be friendly rather than official. If you are going to send an official from the workhouse, with official buttons on his coat, and all that sort of thing, naturally respectable foster-mothers will not accept it; but if the system of inspection which we adopt, and which I believe is adopted practically by every large Society boarding out children, were adopted by Boards of Guardians, I do not think that it would be objected to. I imagine that Boards of Guardians would appoint lady inspectors. I may say that Miss Barlow of Bolton, sister of Sir Thomas Barlow, who is greatly interested in this subject, acts both for our Society and for the Bolton Guardians. She tells me that there is no resentment of inspection on the part of the foster-parents, and that she has no difficulty in getting homes; she has always more homes than children. I believe that the fear of inspection is really a mere bogey. I may say, further, that if the precedent of the Juvenile Offenders’ Act in the appointment of probation officers were followed, and competent individuals were accepted by the Local Government Board or the Home Office as their Inspectors, the objection to inspection would really become a negligible quantity. There is the difficulty that it would probably increase the cost, but I submit that it is most desirable that parents should not board out children with poor people for 1s. 6d. a week. This is a matter I know well; I feel strongly about it. I venture to say that the extension of inspection to one-

Chairman—continued.

child homes would abolish very quickly the conditions under which many of these little children are now living; it would mean life and health to them; and I submit further that it would enable the parent of a child thus left without its own natural home, to secure friendly help, either from a Society, or from a Committee, say a Ladies’ Committee, in connection with the Board of Guardians, or from some person who would soon locally be known as the Visitor of such houses. I think that the question of abolishing homes in which a child can be put for a sum for which it cannot be supported, is one that looks strongly in favour of my own argument; they ought not to be boarded out in those places. It would also increase very greatly the difficulty of parents, unmarried mothers and step-mothers—they are an important element in this case—in disposing of a child who was felt to be in the way or inconvenient. At present the exemption of the one-child home makes it comparatively easy to get rid of these children. It is amazing how many of them are got rid of on the most trifling payment; and the registration of homes would, I think, make the ill-treatment of children in that way, and the disposing of them in that way, much more difficult than it is. It would also make it impossible for children to remain long in bad homes, as they can now, struggling along for years. I have a boy in our care now who came to us boarded-out in a brothel; he was kept continually under the influence of drugs and drink, and a surgeon who saw him after his admission said that it would be months before we knew whether the child was an idiot or not. He was then three years old, his eyes covered with untended ulcers, and he could not hold his head up. He has grown up to be a strong boy, but imbecile; a nice-looking lad, but he cannot learn to read. And there are many such cases. Then I believe that the system of registration would become a sort of certificate of character. As soon as you got over the initial difficulty of inspection, the fact that a woman was certified and registered would be a certificate of respectability. I do not for a moment think that there would be any permanent difficulty. We have an elaborate system of inspection; we have honorary visitors, we have paid visitors, and from time to time I send out a special Inspector to review the whole case, and make a special report to me; and we never find that there is any resentment on the part of people who are doing well by the children. Then there is another matter which seems to me not altogether outside this question, namely, that at present, if a child’s mother, whether married or unmarried, abandons her child, and leaves it on the hands of a foster-parent, the Guardians refuse to take the child off her hands. Notices have been issued in my own parish of Bethnal Green, stating that in the case of any child who has been taken by her foster-mother—however kind the foster-mother may have been, however absolutely certain it is that there is no collusion between the parent and the foster-parent—if the foster-mother, after spending, as I have known, in a particular case, £2 on medical advice

20 February, 1908.]

Rev. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

advice for the child, finds that she cannot afford to keep it, and the mother has abandoned it, they will still force the child upon that foster-mother, with the result, which I submit is altogether contrary to public policy, that the child, who has no claim whatever upon the foster-parent, has to be supported in a home where they cannot afford and are not willing to keep the child. I hold that registration would give foster-parents a moral standing, which they have not got at present. I believe it would protect them against what I feel to be the very harsh and cruel treatment of the Guardians.

96. Before you go to the age limit, I want to ask you this question. Speaking with all the experience that you have, you would unhesitatingly say that you are in favour of an alteration of the Act of 1897, so that it should embrace the one-child homes?—Certainly.

97. And that wherever your name has been used to the contrary, it is in error?—It is.

98. Do you speak to-day on behalf of your Committee, or individually?—I speak on behalf of my Committee, which has unanimously passed a resolution in favour of inspection; but you will readily understand that, covering so large an area as we do, the members of the Committee personally have not any very close knowledge. I have to take personal responsibility for every child.

99. You come in with the expert knowledge, but you have the sympathy and the approval of your Committee?—Undoubtedly.

100. Have you anything to say about the age limit?—As to the age limit, I do not think that is a matter of vital importance. I always say, let us err on the side of protecting the child, but I should not personally express any very strong opinion as to the age limit.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

101. Do I correctly understand that you take over into your Institution children who are at present in baby farms?—Yes, we take any child whose need makes a claim upon us. I do not mean to say that if we found a child was improperly boarded out it would immediately come in; every case would be dealt with on its merits. If we could advise the mother as to where to put the child we should do that in preference to bringing it upon our funds.

102. But you have considerable experience, because your Inspectors go and see whether the home is good or not?—Yes.

103. Irrespective of whether the home is under your direction or not?—Yes; we have excellent Visitors, and every case is inspected by or for us.

104. I understand you to say that inspection is, in your opinion, necessary not merely for cruelty, but on account of the ignorance of foster-parents?—Quite as much and even more so.

105. And some such inspection, or some such visiting, as that done by the health visitors appointed by the different borough councils, is the sort of thing; sympathetic ladies going round to advise?—Yes, I should recommend that, but I think that if the provision in Clause 10 of the Infant Life Protection Act, which now

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

stands in the new Bill exactly as it did before, remained, and the Government accepted the inspection of responsible committees and societies, it would greatly relieve the situation by preventing any difficulty with the more respectable class of foster-mothers, who will accept friendly inspection much more readily than official; and it is undoubtedly thoroughly efficiently done. I can speak for some other societies as well as my own. I believe that the inspection of boarded-out homes is exceedingly well done, and if the Government had the right (as of course it would have) from time to time to take a general review, I think it would be a pity, with the number of inspections that take place on the part of societies, to bring a Government official in unless it was necessary.

106. Do you find in these outside homes that they take the children for a weekly sum which gives them no profit whatever, but is actually below the cost of the child?—Very frequently.

107. For what object do they take the child in?—I have seen a great deal of East London life, of course; we have a good many children boarded out there. The fact that there will be, or they hope there will be, a shilling or two shillings in actual cash coming in week by week is an attraction to these poor people, and they think, “Well, one child more or less will muddle on somehow with the other children.” The attraction of cash is very great to these very poor people. Then it is often done from genuine good nature also.

108. Do you come across cases of periodical payments which cease after a few weeks?—After a few weeks, and after months, and after years; I come across a very large number of such cases. A great many children are abandoned on the hands of their foster-parents.

109. And you would say then that the present Act is practically evaded by the fact that the periodical payments do cease after a short time?—Very frequently.

110. Would you think that if there was inspection of these one-child homes it would make it more difficult for societies engaged in female rescue work to find homes for infants?—I think that possibly there might, at first especially, be a difficulty. I cannot ignore the very strong testimony that is borne by some rescue workers to the fact that they believe it would be so. My experience is that it would not; I think that that difficulty would be got over very quickly and, as I said just now, I think that the fact that the child had to be put into an inspected home would lead the mother to seek the help of a lady Visitor, and it would be an enormous advantage to her that she should. I believe it would be the salvation of a great many of these mothers. In our own homes we do not deal with an illegitimate baby unless some provision is made for helping the mother.

Mr. Power.

111. I suppose where possible you try to board out some of these children in country districts rather than in slums?—We have very few children boarded out anywhere but in the country. We have boarding-out centres at Bishops Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Chipping Norton, on the outskirts

20 February, 1908.]

Rev. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

[Continued.]

Mr. Power—continued.

skirts of Birmingham, and Lichfield; we have, I think, 27 centres, and we do not call London a boarding-out centre at all. There may be a few cases where for special reasons we have a child boarded-out in London, but very few. Country life is what the children want.

112. I think, in your evidence, you draw a distinction between the two sorts of inspections; you spoke of the paid official?—Yes.

113. And you preferred the inspection of ladies, or not-paid officials, rather than paid officials?—I think, where you can get the work done efficiently, it is very much better. It is less offensive to the respectable foster-parent, and though there has been a vast improvement in the Poor Law officials of late years, yet there is not unfrequently a tone about the Poor Law official that is offensive; it must be admitted that it is so. On the other hand, some of the officials, who represent the Local Government Board, especially when they are ladies who have taken up the work for the love of it, are just as welcome as others; the fact that they are official does not make any difference; the personal element comes in.

114. Then, the drift of your evidence on that point is that you would like to have, if possible, full power through the Guardians or their officials, to inspect, but you prefer the general inspection to be done by ladies, and people who are not paid officials?—Yes, by ladies or Ladies' Committees. I believe it would greatly help the children and the parents.

115. Are many babies put out to nurse from the Institution that you are connected with?—Yes. We do not usually take babies into the Institution, unless they are seriously ill, and require medical treatment. I believe babies do much better in cottage homes, in ordinary family life, than they do in a big institution.

116. The reason why I ask you, is because I have known of cases where children have been put out to nurse, and the mothers who were feeding them drank, and I believe it is pretty generally acknowledged that if a woman nursing a child drinks, the probability is that the child will have a strong propensity in that way?—Yes, it is one of the advantages of inspection, that you watch against that very carefully.

117. The point that you raised about foster-parents being obliged to keep on these children, and the Guardians refusing to take them, would not be met by anything that is before us?—It would not be met by any legal enactment in the present Bill, but it is an element of the case, which I venture to hope may arise while the Bill is being discussed; and even if it should not arise, I think that if a system of registration and inspection was instituted, it would give the foster-mother a very different standing from what she has at the present time. I have a case in my mind now, where a very distinguished lady Guardian fought me very hard on this question. The Guardians threw the responsibility for the child upon a very kindly foster-mother, and if I had not known of the case, and interfered with all the influence I could bring to bear from our Society, the child would never have been cared for by the Guardians; but I threatened to publish an account of the case in the news-

Mr. Power—continued.

papers, and they agreed to pay the foster-mother. But you see individual foster-mothers cannot fight; they are afraid of the Guardians, and afraid of the Relieving Officer.

118. There is one other point I wish to ask you. I am sure that your Institution follows out what the last Witness said in endeavouring to board these children out, so far as possible, with people of the same religion as the mothers?—As between Protestants and Catholics, we should. I do not think we trouble very much beyond that. We expect that the children shall attend some Sunday School, and go to some place of worship, if they are old enough.

Mr. John Taylor.

119. Are there many instances of foster-mothers being left in the lurch?—Very many.

120. A good percentage?—Yes, a large percentage.

Mr. Gulland.

121. The only question I want to put to you is as to whether the inspection of single-child homes, which you have been advocating, could be enforced in London? Are there not so many cases in London that it would be very difficult actually to enforce the law?—I do not see why it should be more difficult with one child than with two. There are, no doubt, certain cases in which the inspection is evaded, but I do not think there would be any very large number. There would be a certain number, but I think it would be very possible to carry out the law pretty generally.

122. You have not any idea, I suppose, of how many cases of foster-parents there are in London?—No, and I should doubt whether there are statistics obtainable.

Mr. Bright.

123. Mr. Allen, I think, asked you a question about your inspecting every case. I do not understand that you inspect cases, except where you have yourself boarded out children?—We do in case of applications made to us to take a child because it is boarded out unsuitably. That is where I get my evidence of a large number of cases in which children are unsuitably boarded out by their parents. Sometimes the Visitor is one of our own staff, and sometimes our local correspondent.

124. But you have no means of finding out these cases, scattered about, except through the reports of some other body generally who has found them out?—No; we cannot attempt to cover the whole country, but we get more cases than we can possibly deal with.

125. Would you think that it would be a feasible thing for local bodies to advertise for homes to take in one child, and prevent children from being sent to any other houses?—I do. I think that would be very easily done.

126. You think that if they were to advertise that they wanted a certain number of houses prepared to take in these children, they would receive applications?—Yes, they would, but a Society which was unofficial would get a great many more applications. Still, a local body would always have a number on its register.

20 February, 1908.]

Rev. ARTHUR E. GREGORY, D.D.

[Continued.]

Mr. Bright—continued.

127. Local bodies exist everywhere, and societies do not exist everywhere?—No; but between them I think they would soon be able to meet the need.

128. It would be a practicable thing to say, "Here are inspected houses provided, where such children can be taken in," and to prevent children being sent to any other houses?—I think so; I think there would be no great difficulty in it.

129. At what age do most of the children that come under your care, come to you?—We have no exact limit. I have accepted a child within 24 hours of its birth, when the mother has died in hospital. We take them at any age up to 20, but those that are boarded out come to us as infants, or up to six, or seven, or eight years of age.

130. You were speaking about foster-mothers who get children left on their hands without payments being made, and that the Guardians, in some cases at any rate, refuse to take them over when the foster-mother is unable to keep

Mr. Bright—continued.

the child. I was quite surprised to hear it. Do you think that is a general practice with Boards of Guardians?—It is a general practice.

131. In the country, as well as in London?—Yes, it is so in the country.

132. If people, for adopting these children, were chosen and inspected, they would probably, in most cases, be able to keep the children, and the children would then, I suppose, not be handed over to them without sufficient payment?—I think they would not. I think the local authority, or a Committee of the local authority, would be obliged to supplement the payment.

133. And such cases, then, would probably not occur?—They would not occur, except in the case of women with illegitimate children, who want to get rid of them because of the scandal. There will always be a certain proportion of those cases. In such cases, I hold that the public authority is bound to take the child over, and not throw it upon the hands of the foster-parent.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Tuesday, 25th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Mr. Bright.

Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Gulland.

Mr. Power.

Mr. John Taylor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

134. You are Clerk to the Guardians of Bethnal Green ?—Yes.

135. How long have you held that position ?—About 15 years. My experience there has extended beyond that as Assistant for 27 years altogether.

136. Have you seen the terms of reference to this Committee ?—I have.

137. You observe that they are very limited—to two points ?—Just so.

138. Then, perhaps, you will lay before us what you desire to say ?—From my experience in Bethnal Green, in seeing the applications for admission to our institutions of cases of children that have been put out to nurse, single cases invariably, I do not hesitate to say that it would be an advantage to bring them under the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, because the opportunity of putting out a child to nurse is taken advantage of to repudiate the child altogether and to desert it. Last year we took four such cases, but of course that would not comprise all the applications that we had. The principle upon which my Board acts is to refuse to deal with these cases when they have a report from their Officer that the child has so far not been badly treated or the surroundings are not very bad. Of course, when it is obvious that the child, as in all those we have actually received, is being neglected, we take the child, and then try to discover the parents. Very often these cases are adopted for a fixed sum ; but it invariably happens that the foster-parents have not the remotest idea of the names or whereabouts of anybody with whom they are in negotiation ; and that lends itself very readily to desertion and neglect. I have here one case which bears that out, a case where an old couple took a child by seeing advertised in the "Camberwell and Peckham Times" that somebody was wanted to adopt a child. An old lady and gentleman brought the child to them, with £10, and left it there ; and no precaution was taken by the foster-parents at all to inquire who they were, or

Chairman—continued.

anything. That child was neglected, and brought in by a lady Inspector of the London County Council. It frequently happens that we have cases of that kind. Also we suffer very much from foreigners, Polish Jews and so forth. A Polish Jew will have a wife in Poland and come over here and marry again, and they have been known to desert the child by the second wife, which is done by handing it to one of their co-religionists, some very poor person who really could not afford to keep the child, and that poor person brings it to us. Then the condition of those children that we do actually receive is always very deplorable and neglected ; it takes some time before they pick up. I do not know that I can say anything else, except that it must not be assumed that this is an exceptional year when I had these four cases.

139. Will you give us some idea of the area which Bethnal Green Union covers, and the population ?—Just about a square mile.

140. And what is the population ?—130,000.

141. And your evidence is based upon your official experience ?—Of 27 years.

142. Of 27 years, relating to that population ?—Yes, relating to that population.

143. Do you know at all whether the conditions are similar outside your own area, as an inhabitant of London ?—I could not say.

144. You wish to confine yourself to your own official experience ?—Yes.

145. 130,000 people is not a large proportion of the whole population of the Metropolis ?—No, only it is in a small area, and crowded.

146. Do you think that there are any exceptional features in your district ?—I do not think so.

147. It might be taken as a general sample ?—Certainly, of the East End.

148. Then you have not drawn any conclusion. Do you come here to suggest any alteration in the law, having given us these facts ?—I read the two sections of the Act which would limit these operations. There is one section which compels the foster-parents to obtain the names and addresses of the persons to whom the child belongs.

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. DAVID THOMAS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

That would be one safeguard, because we could then always trace back the parent.

149. Are you speaking of the Bill, or of the Act ?—The Act.

150. The Act of 1897 ?—Yes, the last Act. I have not read the Bill.

151. What you are saying relates to the Act ?—Just so.

152. You have read that section. What is your suggestion or opinion ?—That it should be extended to those who take one child only.

153. Then you are in favour of the extension of the Act of 1897 to one-child homes ?—Undoubtedly.

154. Have you anything to say with regard to the alteration of the age—Section 2 ?—That is five years now, is it not ?

155. Five years now ?—I do not think I can say much upon it ; I have not made any observation with regard to that.

156. It is the extension of the Act to one-child homes that you come to press upon our attention ?—Yes, so far as my experience goes.

157. May I ask, are we to take it that you speak by the authority of your Board ?—I have not had their authority, but they could not say anything else but what I have told you.

158. You know their mind ?—Yes, absolutely. It is a very difficult question.

159. But however difficult the question is, you have no doubt ?—Just so.

160. Difficulties sometimes suggest doubt, you know ?—Yes. I would not hesitate myself. Where there is a will there is a way.

Mr. Power.

161. The only point I wish to ask is, that practically there is no inspection in these single-child homes. There may be inspection where charitable institutions prevail ; but if they are not in such an institution there is no inspection, charitable or otherwise ?—I take it that this Act does not provide for inspection ; I am not aware of any.

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR called in ; and Examined.!

Chairman.

172. You are, I think, the Director of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ?—Yes.

173. How long have you occupied that position ?—Three years. I succeeded the Reverend Benjamin Waugh. I was his Assistant for several years previous to my appointment as Director.

174. How long were you Assistant ?—I was four years Assistant, and I have been on the Central Office staff for the last nine years. I had been connected with the Society, as an honorary worker, for many years.

175. Perhaps you will lay before us such evidence as you desire to offer ?—Having read the Bill, I am strongly in favour of an alteration of Section 1, so as to include the registration and inspection of all children put out to nurse apart from their parents. The Society has had to intervene in a

Mr. Arthur Allen.

162. Do your Guardians do any boarding-out themselves ?—Yes.

163. Do you have any difficulty in getting good homes in which to board out children ?—I had better explain that more fully. When I say that we board out, we have boarded out ; but we have given it up for some years. We have only now just the children that are getting over age. My Board was strongly of opinion that boarding-out is equally unsatisfactory, because of the difficulty of getting suitable foster-parents. The foster-parents invariably are people who are not far removed from pauperism themselves.

164. You found in boarding-out that inspection was very necessary ?—Yes.

165. Did you find that it was objected to ?—No. They were inspected by local ladies in that case, not by the Guardians at all.

166. Would your experience tend to show that respectable people would object to inspection if they had boarded-out children ?—I do not think so for a moment. It is only those who have something to conceal who object to inspection.

167. With regard to these baby-farming cases you were speaking about, is it your experience that weekly payments cease after a time ?—Yes. I can only say that the cases only come to us when the weekly payment ceases.

168. That is to say, you have had cases in which the child has been taken for a weekly payment and that weekly payment has ceased ?—Yes.

169. After short periods or long periods ?—I am sorry I could not exactly tell you that, because I have not gone into that point ; but that is the reason why they have come to us.

170. They come to you because the weekly payments cease ?—Yes, they become practically destitute, so far as the child is concerned.

Mr. Power.

171. There is inspection where two children are in the house, but not where one child only is in the house ?—Just so.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Chairman—continued.

large number of one-child cases, where the children have been neglected or ill-treated, to quote the words of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, “in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury to their health.” From the 1st of January, 1903, to the 30th of June, 1907, the total number of one-child cases reported to the Society was 2,101.

176. That is to say, children who were neglected or ill-treated in the manner that you have indicated ?—Yes, in the one-child homes.

177. But as regards their treatment, they were children who were neglected or ill-treated in the manner you have indicated ?—In a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering.

178. Can you give us the area from which those 2,101 cases were drawn ?—England, Ireland, and Wales.]

179. Not

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

179. Not Scotland?—Not Scotland.
 180. You do not operate in Scotland?—Scotland has a separate Society of its own.
 181. But England, Ireland, and Wales?—England, Ireland, and Wales.
 182. A population of nearly 40,000,000?—Very nearly; 97 of these cases were reported to us in London, and 2,004 in the provinces.

183. Those figures relate to a period of four and a half years?—Yes. There must of necessity have been a large number of cases unreported; for, although the standard required by local authorities who board children out is high, the cases that are reported to the Society are naturally bad before they are reported; much unnecessary suffering may go on for a long time before anyone moves to report the case; so that I am prepared to say that we cannot consider for a moment that we have discovered anything like the number of cases which have existed.

184. May I take you back to the 2,101 for a moment? Do those four years show a pretty even number per annum, or are there great fluctuations?—They show a fair average.

185. I suppose your statement that there must of necessity have been a large number of cases unreported, is founded on facts within your knowledge; it is not a mere idea?—No, it is an expert opinion, based on our experience in the country generally with regard to cruelty to children, that although last year we had 40,433 cases, those cases were discovered, or reported upon, in areas where we have 210 Inspectors. The presence of an Inspector in a locality results in the reporting of a large number of extra cases; and in many cases where we have no Inspector, the visit of a man, even for a certain period, will tend to the reporting of a number of cases. Many of these one-child cases were of a very serious nature, I am sorry to say; some of the children were permanently injured. If I may quote one case that was discovered in Maidstone, a girl aged four years, for whom no payment was made by the parent for maintenance, was found by the Inspector very thin, ravenously hungry, her feet in a dreadful condition from neglected chilblains, two or three of her toes having rotted off; there had been no medical attention for three weeks. At that period, owing to our intervention, the doctor ordered the child to go to the Infirmary. And in that case the own children of the family were in very good condition. The woman received a sentence of six weeks' hard labour for her cruelty.

186. Could you multiply that example?—By a great many. I could, if the Committee wished it, send you particulars, and will with pleasure if the Committee so desire. I have just taken one case as typical, and by no means the worst of the kind. I wish to avoid over-statement.

187. But you state on your authority and experience that that is a typical case, which might be multiplied?—Yes; a very large number of children are permanently injured by the treatment they receive at the hands of the people with whom they are placed to nurse.

Mr. Power.

188. Single-child cases?—Yes; I am confining myself entirely to that. Other children have

Mr. Power—continued.

died as the result of their ill-treatment. Perhaps you will allow me to give you a London case and a country case here.

Chairman.

189. If you please?—The London case is a case of a child nine years old, just outside the limit (that is a point on the age, which I should like to refer to presently); there were three own children, well cared for, and the woman having the child was the wife of a boot finisher, receiving from her husband 26s. a week, and was earning herself 5s. a week by making match-boxes. The child was the illegitimate daughter of the woman's sister, a simple-minded young girl in service, paying 3s. a week for its maintenance, so that there was 34s. a week coming into the house. The child had been with her aunt almost from birth—a few weeks after. When found the clothing was filthy, the child was verminous, bruised all over, unable to speak, scarcely able to stand.

Mr. Bright.

190. At nine years old?—At nine. Here again the own children were in very fair condition. The child was taken from the house on the 28th of May, removed to hospital, and died on the 18th of June as the result of the ill-treatment. The woman had six weeks' hard labour. The country case was in Leicester—a woman, a well-known baby farmer, who took single children only. When the child was found it was in a verminous condition, with sores on its back, its eyes sore and discharging, emaciated without any disease to account for it, the muscles in the legs wasted and useless, no doctor had been called in. Two children had previously died while in her care, and other children had been removed at various times by their parents in very serious condition. The woman was prosecuted, and received six months' hard labour.

Mr. John Taylor.

191. What was the age there?—Eighteen months. At inquests on the bodies of these children who have died in single-child homes, the Coroners have frequently called attention to the necessity for an alteration of the Act.

Chairman.

192. You know that of your own knowledge?—I know that of my own knowledge. In many of the serious cases referred to, the own children of the family are well cared for; that is a remarkable feature—that children can be subjected to the most appalling neglect and cruelty in a home where the own children of a family are quite well cared for. I have here a case in London where a boy of two and a half years was kept by the wife of a postman. She was receiving 30s. a week from her husband and 5s. a week for the care of the child; it was an illegitimate boy of a domestic servant, a cousin of the woman. When found the child was very thin, miserable looking, dirty, almost naked, wasting away. There was a doctor in the house at the time to the own two children; he was not asked to see this one. We removed the child under an order from the Magistrates, and the woman was warned that she will be kept under

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

under observation. I have also a case in Bilston of a boy of three years and eight months. This was in the house of a puddler and his wife, the man earning 32s. a week and receiving 3s. a week for the child. The child was an illegitimate boy of a servant girl. The child was dirty, with dried excrement round its hips and the bottom of its back, quite unable to stand; the leg and thigh bones deformed through constant sitting, a bruise under the left eye and on the back of the left hand. The cot and bedroom in which the child slept were disgusting; and the own children were robust and very well grown. These people were prosecuted; the man was fined £5, and the woman was sent to prison for three months with hard labour.

193. In these distressing cases that you have been giving us, there was no want of means, I gather?—I have quoted them purposely to show that this was not owing to poverty; and without labouring the point, and without giving you further cases, I may say that these are typical cases. I could give the Committee, if you please, the details in almost every case of these one-child cases, where the particulars are equally bad, and in many cases really worse; in some of the cases where children have died the details are almost too terrible to relate.

194. Can you give us any idea with respect to the mothers of these children? Had they visited them in any way; were they conscious of the state of these illegitimate children?—In one or two cases, yes; in other cases, no. In the Leicester case, particularly, the woman advertised in the papers at some distance from her home, and took the children of servant girls who were quite unable to pay long visits to look after them. In fact, when we have been able to communicate with the mothers, having found their addresses, which is sometimes difficult, they are invariably willing to remove the children and do what we ask.

195. Are we to take it that, although the mothers were the persons responsible for paying pretty regularly for these cases, they took no further trouble in many cases?—Yes; they are glad to get rid of the child.

196. Those are illustrative examples that you could multiply?—Yes.

197. I do not think it is necessary that you should?—If you please. If the old Act had applied to one-child cases, there is no doubt that the miseries of these children would have been prevented to a large degree; for in districts where proper inspection is carried out under the old Act, we do not often find cases of two children being neglected, inspection preventing the ill-treatment. I ought to say that that is true only of places where the Act has been applied. We have had equally serious cases in towns where there has been failure to administer the Act by failing to provide inspection. Then I should like to say that there is a large trade carried on in the adoption of one-child cases. With a view to the evidence to be given to-day, I had a search made of the newspapers of the country, not by any means complete, depending first on our regular news-cutting agency, and then on our 210 Inspectors who were asked to send up local papers. From the

Chairman—continued.

3rd to the 17th of this present month, there were 386 newspaper advertisements offering to adopt children. This does not include the duplicates—many of them are duplicated in as many as half a dozen papers, one person advertising in six or seven papers.

198. You mean, 386 separate advertisements?—386 separate advertisements.

199. Now will you give us some idea of the area to which those 386 advertisements applied?—Again, England, Ireland and Wales.

200. Were they pretty fairly distributed over the counties of England, Ireland and Wales?—Yes; possibly in agricultural districts there is a certain increase in the advertisements—in Kent a good many, in Essex a good many, in Devonshire a good many, and in one or two of the northern counties, too.

201. I think, if you would send to the Committee Clerk a paper containing the particulars of the counties in those three countries, it would be useful?—If you please. I would like to make a complete return of this whole question of advertisements, it is a most interesting document.

202. It is a very striking statement?—It reveals a remarkable state of things

203. Perhaps you will do that?—I will, with pleasure. A significant fact is that in only 11 of these advertisements was there any reference to the taking of more than one child.

204. I think, before we part from that, I had better ask you do you think that those two weeks were at all exceptional?—Not at all.

205. Is there one period of the year—when, for instance, spring opens—more than another in which they appear?—My experience of this subject leads me to say that there is a regular trade done by a certain class of person in this unfortunate business.

206. Would those advertisements be continued over some weeks?—In several cases they appeared in the three weekly issues of the paper sent out.

207. Three hundred and seventy-five of them, you say, related to one child?—Yes. I would say also that the majority of children boarded out, in my experience, are illegitimate. If I may give you an analysis of the figures already quoted, of the 97 one-child cases found in London, 26 were legitimate and 71 illegitimate; of the 2,004 country cases, 539 were legitimate and 1,465 illegitimate.

208. The proportions is not far from the same in each case?—No. A certain proportion of these illegitimate children are, for obvious reasons, weak at birth. I say that these are just the cases where special care is required, and for that reason I advocate early and systematic inspection. I have found for several years past that one-child cases have been popular with unprincipled people, because of non-registration and freedom from inspection. I am quite aware of the argument, that one child may be taken for love; but two or more must be taken for trade.

209. In the cases you gave us, where there were means and not care, there did not seem to be much of love?—Exactly. My experience leads me to say that in one-child cases it is difficult to come to any settled conclusion, except that inspection is necessary; for the illustrative cases are

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

are so remarkable. For instance, I have frequently found that in these one-child cases the sum paid for the maintenance of the child has gone to supplement the otherwise small income of the foster-parent. In a London case, the woman was the wife of a labourer partly unemployed. Her own child was in good condition and a little nine months' baby was in a terribly emaciated state. The mother was a cook, and the child was paid for regularly at the rate of 5s. a week. In another case, in Birmingham a married woman separated from her husband had a 19 months' old child; she was being regularly paid 5s. a week, her own income being very small; and the child was in a terrible condition, its eyes full of matter, the bed on which it slept was filthily dirty, there were sores on its buttocks and left arm, and it was wrapped in rags. Then in some of the bad cases, as has been already stated, the income was good; and further proof of that can be given in just two illustrative cases.

210. Do not duplicate evidence?—I will not. This is simply in proof of the good wages—unless you will take what I have said on the former cases as indicating that you are satisfied as to that.

211. I think that is almost sufficient?—Then may I just for one moment deal with two cases only, very bad cases, in which no payment was made at all, as bearing out my statement that it is very difficult to say whether it is want of money, or too much money, or love—for, singularly enough, people will take children without any payment and treat them in a way that is past understanding. In the case of a two-years' old child, the woman who kept it was drunken, she brutally ill-treated it. When we found it, it had its forehead badly bruised, its eyes and the sides of its face were black, and the neighbours stated in evidence that it was quite a common thing for the woman to knock this two-year old baby down and kick it about the house; and no payment was received for it. In one other case, where a boy of four months was kept with no payment, it was terribly thin, it was sore through neglect, and frequently knocked about by the man; it had injury to its spine, severe bruises on its face, and its clothing had to be cut off from it because it was so dirty and ragged.

212. These were all one-child cases?—Yes, one-child cases, and all with no payment.

Mr. Bright.

213. Were those illegitimate children?—Yes. The Society adopts the policy of boarding-out children whenever possible, so that in that matter we can speak with some experience. We have to take the legal custody of a certain number of children when, for obvious reasons, it is impossible to allow them to return to either immoral or brutal parents. We have had no difficulty in finding suitable homes for these children. In fact, now that it is known throughout the country that we are willing to board out children, we are constantly refusing good applications. I should say, therefore, from my experience, that there is no difficulty in placing children in suitable homes. Then there is the further fact that inspection of all single-child houses is

Mr. Bright—continued.

already undertaken by the reputable Societies who deal with children. We are in friendly relations with most of these Societies, and sometimes avail ourselves of their services for placing children, of course paying the maintenance necessary; and in that case the children boarded out are visited, first by ladies in the locality where they are placed, by representatives of the home responsible for them, and then by my own representative, who brings me a report to satisfy me that the children are being properly kept. In all my experience I have never heard an objection raised by any person to these visits of inspection. Of course, they are paid by people out of uniform, and, as a matter of fact, no one in the locality, in the case of my own Visitor, has the slightest idea that the lady calling is an Inspector at all; they are either a lady employed for the purpose, who moves about the country looking after the girls, or a man looking after the boys, and no one is likely to know that it is a visit of inspection; yet these houses are, for my purposes, inspected once a year over and above the inspection of the local Institution.

Chairman.

214. I may take it, then, that these persons do not wear any badge or distinctive dress?—No.

Mr. Bright.

215. But the Inspector of the local Institution does?—I think not. If you take the Waifs and Strays Society, or Dr. Barnardo's, you will get that from them.

216. I was meaning the Inspectors of your Society?—The inspection of homes is not done by our uniform men, who inquire into cases of cruelty; it is done by two people on my Central Office staff specially appointed for that business. There is no uniform.

Mr. John Taylor.

217. The uniform officer just inspects cases where there is suspected cruelty?—Yes; but the single children boarded out are visited by people out of uniform. I am, therefore, driven to the conclusion that the evils of inspection have been greatly exaggerated.

Chairman.

218. Before we come to that, are we to take it from you that with regard to inspection, very much depends upon the manner in which it is carried out and the persons by whom it is done?—Absolutely.

219. Is it a thing which requires great tact and discretion?—It is.

220. It is not everybody, man or woman, who makes a good Inspector, I suppose you would say?—By no means.

221. They must have something more, I suppose, than a mere desire to get through the day's work?—A personal interest in children is I hold essential to a good Inspector. With reference to this question of inspection, perhaps we can speak with authority by reason of the fact that we have every year in our ordinary work to inquire into something like 40,000 cases of reported cruelty.

222. That is 800 a week, on the average?—Yes; that

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

that inspection of these cases is undertaken by men who are in uniform, but I have never heard of a case, at least, I will not say never, but very rarely, only in an isolated instance or two, where any objection has been raised by the person whose house has been visited. More than that, it is a significant fact that after a first visit of inspection the Inspector is welcomed to the house as a friend rather than as an official, and that is because he is selected for his special interest in children. That brings me to the point that you put, that it is essential, I hold, in every form of inspection that the person selected shall be selected for his or her fitness for the post.

I have only one other thing to say on the general question, and that is that while I am in favour of inspection in all cases, I am of opinion that where childless people adopt children in good faith—in a few cases, possibly—where a childless family adopt a child really for love and where no payment is made, power might be given to local authorities to grant a certificate to such persons after being satisfied as to their *bona fides*.

223. In other words, you would give power to contract out?—Yes, under those special circumstances. But I would have this safeguard, knowing human nature, that should any offence under Part 2 of the Bill be committed by persons to whom exemption certificates have been granted, they should suffer additional penalties.

224. Then that is all you have to say on the principal point?—Yes.

225. I may take it that we have from you a very clear and unhesitating opinion (do not let me put words into your mouth, you follow what I am saying) in favour of the extension of the Act of 1897 to one-child cases?—Yes.

226. Have you anything to say about the age limit?—I should strongly approve of raising the age from five to seven; in fact—I am afraid that I shall not carry the Committee with me here—I go further and say that I would prefer that the age throughout the Bill should be the same, not only in Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5, but in Part 1, and that a child should be a child under 14; for this reason: that many of these one-child cases already referred to have been children over five years; some of them, indeed, were children over seven; you remember the case where a child of nine was quite unable to stand and unable to speak, the child of a half-witted servant girl, who had been neglected from birth. My unfortunate experience leads me to say that no child is safe in the hands of certain people, and that inspection is advisable, even up to the age of 14; but the amendment is seven, and I am quite in favour of that.

227. You are in favour of the amendment to seven, but you would rather prefer to go beyond?—Very much.

228. We may take it, of course, that you come here by the authority of your Society to speak their mind?—Quite so.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

229. Do you ever get any large proportion of baby-farming cases under your Society?—Of the two and more children, do you mean?

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

230. No, of one-child cases?—I should think we might say, Yes, the majority; but, anyhow, a certain proportion. It is difficult to answer that, as one never quite knows how many cases there are.

231. But you are represented in practically every part of the area that you have been speaking of?—Not quite, because we hold that an Inspector ought not to have more than 100,000 of population to look after; and, unfortunately, many of them have some 200,000, or even more than that.

232. I was very much struck by the apparently small proportion of cases which came from London, only 97 as against 2,004. Is not that a small proportion with regard to the population of the whole area?—Yes. Great credit, I think, should be given to the system of inspection of the two-child cases and over, and to the fact that there is much more publicity in London as to official inspection than in the country. We ourselves have 17 men in London. The Police are on the alert, and the neighbours are much more likely to report what they see in London than they are in the country, where there is much more fear of consequences.

233. Do you think there is more danger of cruelty in a small country town than in London?—In outlying districts that is our experience. Cruelty may go on for a much longer time, people being fearful to report it.

234. Are the baby-farmers well known to your Society; do you watch the advertisements in the papers and follow them up?—I am now tracing every person whose name appears in reply to the advertisements of which I spoke; but the person who takes a one-child case regularly is a very elusive individual; they move from place to place. Even now I have a case of an advertisement that appeared on the 3rd of February, a letter was sent on the 8th, and the person had left the address from which she advertised; and we found, on inquiry, that she had frequently changed her residence within the last 12 months.

235. Have you any evidence, in these one-child cases, that children follow one another quickly; that they have one child, say, to-day, and another child six months hence?—Yes, we have a very singular illustration of that. We found a little boy in a house in London in a terribly neglected condition; we warned the woman, but as the mother of the child removed it—she was a servant girl—no further proceedings were taken. Three weeks after, our attention was called to a case in quite another part of London, and on making a visit of inspection we found it was the little boy whom we had just removed from the house referred to; and on going back to make inquiries at the first house, we found that the woman had been supplied with another child. My view is, therefore, that even if the child is compulsorily withdrawn, or it is withdrawn by the parent, the woman proceeds to advertise and find another.

236. Would you say that the way in which the Act has been administered with regard to two children has made it even more necessary than before that the one-child home should be taken into the scope of the Act?—Certainly.

237. That

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

237. That is to say, that all the worst cases now would be one-child cases, and not two-child cases?—We have had very bad two-child cases, but only in districts where inspection was not enforced, the permissive nature of the Act applying, of course.

238. Where the Act is enforced you do not find that the two-child cases are bad?—No, I have no recollection at the moment of any case in which two children had been reported to us in any town where there has been inspection.

239. You do boarding-out; do you find that you get homes which will take the children not wholly for gain, or are they all homes where the money coming in is an essential thing?—We should not place a child, if we knew it, with anybody who took it merely for profit. We find that there are quite a number of people in the country with one child who would like to have another; they have a boy and they would like to have a girl to bring up with it, or the reverse, and very often people who are in quite a fair way of living are glad to do that. If we get a very bad case reported, and there is any publicity in the Press, we get quite a number of applications from people whose credentials cannot be questioned, willing to adopt the child; so that we never have any difficulty.

240. And you find in those cases that there is never any objection to inspection, I understand?—Not the slightest.

241. Though there might be to a brass-buttoned and uniformed Inspector?—That is so.

242. But to an ordinary intelligent lady coming in to inquire, there is no objection?—Not the slightest.

Mr. Power.

243. You spoke of the good effects of inspection where the Act is worked. Is it a voluntary Act?—The old Act said that local authorities may appoint Inspectors.

244. When you speak of the old Act, what Act do you mean?—The Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, under which registration of two or more children was compulsory, but the power to appoint Inspectors was permissive; and in small districts, where the cost of inspection was considered as a matter that would burden the rates, no Inspector was appointed.

245. Could you tell the Committee whether the Act has been generally worked or not?—I think so, generally.

246. Might I ask you whose duty is it, at present, to inspect where more than two children are kept?—The local authority's.

247. Have they a particular officer for the purpose, or is it the Relieving Officer who does it?—In some cases they appoint an officer who has some other function to fulfil; in one or two cases independent people; it depends very largely on the class of constituency. Manchester, for instance, would appoint a female Inspector, who would do nothing else but inspect boarded-out children. A small constituency would give £10 a year possibly to a School Attendance Officer as added remuneration, and he would be the Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act.

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Mr. Power—continued.

In other cases the Relieving Officer would act in that capacity.

248. I can imagine no position requiring more tact and temper, and so forth, and that is the reason I asked the question, because I think a man might be a very good Relieving Officer possibly and a very indifferent Visitor in such cases. Now another question arises. You say that at present where two children are kept, inspection is not resented, but almost courted, I understand?—I was not speaking so much of inspection under the Infant Life Protection Act; I was speaking of the inspection I know more of, that is, inspection by our own officers.

249. But you do not know whether it is resented?—I cannot speak with any authority as to inspection under the Infant Life Protection Act. I can only say that our inspection, either of single or of two-child cases and more, has never met with opposition from the people who have been caring for the children.

250. It is not a matter of fact, but a matter of opinion. What do you think of the objection that is urged against inspection of these single-child houses?—I think that the evil of inspection has been greatly exaggerated.

251. And you think that with time it would lessen?—I can only go by my own experience, and say that I think there is no difficulty in finding the right class of homes. It means a little extra search possibly sometimes, but the search is usually successful.

Mr. Gulland.

252. With regard to the Institutions who board out children, your own Society and others, you said that practically you do not have any trouble?—None.

253. Can you tell us what difference of payment there is in these cases and in cases of private boarding-out?—We make a statutory payment of 5s. per week, except in cases where a child is ill and requires special care, when the rate of payment is increased.

254. And what, according to your experience, would be the payment for an ordinary child?—5s. per week.

255. And where it has been put out, say, an illegitimate child, to board?—That is usually about the amount charged; 5s. a week is the usual amount paid. In one or two of the cases which I have quoted to-day, the payment was as small as 3s.; in other cases it has gone as high as 7s.; in one case, a very bad case, the mother was paying 10s. a week for the child.

256. Then the difference of treatment is not due to difference in payment; it is due to the carelessness of the person who boards the child?—It is a significant fact that in one or two cases where the payment has been highest the treatment has been worst. A woman who has no love for a child, but a great love for money, takes as much money as she can, and pays little attention to the child in her charge.

257. Then an Institution would not give a child into that woman's charge, because she would be known to be a person who was not trustworthy?—Yes.

4

258. Then

25 February, 1908.]

MR. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

258. Then the difficulty arises only because of the carelessness of the person who does the boarding-out?—Yes, that is so.

259. And you suggest, then, that compulsory inspection of the one-child home would safeguard that difficulty?—It would prevent to a very large degree the recurrence of any such case as I have quoted to the Committee to-day, my point being that, instead of a case being so bad as to call the attention of the neighbours and to induce them to report it to us, inspection would prevent the suffering of the child at once by discovering it, and so avoiding the terrible details that I have had to give you.

260. Then do you suggest that the one-child inspection should be compulsory, or that it should be as in the old Act, optional?—Compulsory.

261. Then, with regard to the point you have just put in reply to my last question, had inspection been compulsory that case of a child nine years old would have been discovered before he was seven years old?—Unfortunately, no; because the Act of 1897 fixed the age at five years, so that that child would have escaped the Infant Life Protection man altogether.

262. But would he not have been discovered before five if inspection had been compulsory?—Certainly; I see your point.

263. If inspection is made compulsory before five, there is not the same necessity for the extension of the age to nine or 14 as you suggested?—I quite agree.

Mr. Bright.

264. I think you say that these worst cases are mostly of illegitimate children?—They are.

265. What inference do you draw from that?—Several. Firstly, that the mother is a woman who will do anything to avoid publicity; secondly, that she is often far away from the scene of action; thirdly, that she is often a fearful person—she gets into the hands of an unprincipled woman who will draw all the money from her; and fourthly—and this is very important—these foster-parents are so deceptive that they write the most extraordinary letters, and many of these women have letters from the foster-parent saying that the children are perfectly all right. I have a whole batch of letters in the office to that effect, speaking of the “poor little dear,” and so on, and saying how well it is.

266. You do not think, do you, that in many of these cases the intention is a deliberate intention to kill the child gradually?—I am afraid I should be bound to say, if I were pressed, that that is a factor in certain cases. Three women have been hanged during the last 18 months for killing children, and they were single nurse cases.

267. But one cannot quite understand when they are getting payments week by week for these children, that they should wish to make away with them?—That touches another and a wider question outside, which I would rather not at the moment answer.

268. I do not mean from the point of view of the mother, but of the woman who takes the child in. She receives 5s. a week, or whatever

Mr. Bright—continued.

it may be; why should she wish to end the life of the child?—She insures the child, in all probability.

269. These baby-farmers insure the children?—Yes.

270. Then in those cases you would say that the deaths of the children are often not owing to carelessness but to carefulness?—Yes.

271. Giving them no chance?—Yes.

272. There is an Act in force now which is not permissive?—The Act of 1897, making registration compulsory but inspection permissive. The local authority *may* appoint Inspectors.

273. Does not that render the Act almost useless?—To my mind, yes. I am always strongly advocating that the word “*may*” shall be turned into “*shall*.”

274. Do not you think that when they are bound to register and yet there is no one appointed to see whether they register, it is almost a dead letter?—May I give a case in Hampshire? Our attention was called to two children; they were sitting on boxes. It took the doctor over an hour to remove them from the boxes on which they were sitting. One arm of one girl was fractured, and the hand had gone round the wrong way. Both legs of the other child were fractured, and both feet had gone round the wrong way. An immediate surgical operation was ordered. The children are in my custody and are now growing up very well. But I am strongly in favour of compulsory inspection. That was a case where, to save £10, the local authority had not appointed an Inspector.

275. But the people had been registered?—They had registered.

276. But they were not inspected?—Yes, the woman had registered, but was not inspected.

277. Are there many places where no Inspector is appointed?—I am afraid that I could not give any reliable answer on that point.

278. Would you think it well that local authorities should advertise for people willing to take these children in, and prevent their being taken in in any other houses than those under their supervision?—To have a register of desirable persons, you mean?

279. Yes?—The difficulty in that appears to me to be that to a certain extent it would label a child who goes there as either an unwanted child or as an child who is an inspected child. I should much prefer a system of inviting requests for children and allowing them to be dealt with on their merits.

280. It would not exclude that. But you say there is no difficulty in obtaining decent people to take care of children?—That is my experience.

281. If the local body advertises for such people, in cases where they found people willing to take the child in for love, and as you suggested a while ago, people that it would not be desirable to inspect, there might be an exception made in those cases, and that would avoid any difficulty?—Yes, an exemption certificate, I agree.

282. But that the children should not be allowed to go to any places except those that had been approved by the local body?—Yes.

283. Might

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. ROBERT JOHN PARR.

[Continued.]

Mr. Power.

283. Might I ask whether these homes where one child is kept are registered, or not?—No. Under the Bill all cases of two and more children will be registered. These cases will be registered under Section 1.

Mr. JOSEPH BROWN called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

285. You, I think, are the President of the Poor Law Unions Association of England and Wales?—I am.

286. And that Association is one to which Boards of Guardians are empowered to contribute by the Poor Law Unions Association Expenses Act, 1898?—That is so.

287. Can you tell us a little about the area that your Association covers. How many Unions have you in the Association?—378 now.

288. Out of a total of how many?—Out of 630.

289. That is to say about half the Unions are in your Association?—Rather more than half, and it will be found that there will be four-fifths of the populous Unions in the Association.

290. Rather more than half the Unions, and a much greater proportion of the population?—At least two-thirds of the population. I may state that I am just completing my thirtieth year as a Guardian in the Dewsbury Union.

291. I suppose your Association meets from time to time?—It does.

292. It has a Committee, has it?—It has what is called the Council of the Association, consisting of 30 members, and that Council meets about four times a year. It has also two standing Committees, one on Parliamentary and legal matters, and the other on general and financial matters, which meet in between the Council Meetings.

293. How long have you been President of the Association?—Seven years I have held the Presidency. I was in at the formation of the Association, but I was appointed President after three years had elapsed.

294. Then may we take it that you are the authoritative mouthpiece of the Association on this question which is before this Committee?—I should hardly like to take that responsibility in this case, for this reason, which, I think, you will see, is abundantly justified: I received your Clerk's communication only on the Thursday or the Friday, and I was asked to send my *précis* in by the following Tuesday; therefore, I could not possibly communicate either with the Council or with the Secretary of my Association, and but for my very strong feeling in this matter personally I should have replied to your Clerk, and said that I would lay the matter before my Council. But I gathered from his letter that the matter was somewhat urgent, and therefore I took it upon me to answer the questions straight off without consulting with any of my colleagues or even with the officials of the Association.

295. Then we will take the evidence from you with all the authority that you exercise as President?—You may venture to do so far. I should like to say, however, that it would be more fair

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Mr. Power—continued.

284. But at present there is no register kept of single child homes?—No.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Chairman—continued.

to my Association if the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, who has had this matter in his own hands very largely and is better posted up by far in the matter of details than I am, were given an opportunity of appearing before you.

296. We will bear that suggestion in mind. Now, perhaps, you will proceed to lay before us what you desire to say?—I want to say that in my connection with the Association there has been no question that has occupied the same prominence in the thought and attention of the Association that this question of the children has from the beginning.

297. Do you mean the children at large, or the one-child system?—It is bound to devolve on to the one-child case, because so far as the two children or more are concerned, the power is given to the Unions, although in comparatively few cases that power is exercised, unfortunately. The one-child case is undoubtedly the crux of the whole business.

298. And that case is before us, and nothing else is before us?—Quite so, and that is the only question that is before us, strictly speaking.

299. Then, will you now give us your opinion about that?—It is difficult to know exactly where to begin. Perhaps I had better begin by saying that the exclusion of the one-child case renders absolutely futile the best efforts of those Boards who seek to carry out the Act of 1897. We are met at every turn in those cases where inspection is needed with the difficulty that the Act provides for the exclusion of the one-child case. May I give you just three cases that occurred in my own Union of Dewsbury, which will illustrate my point?

300. That is what we want?—We were almost the first to appoint an Inspector under the old Act. The very year in which the Act came into force we appointed a lady Inspector, and she tells us of the difficulties that arise in the bad homes. In the other homes there is no difficulty. May I read you her remarks? I communicated with her, and asked her to give me a few facts bearing upon her work. She has been appointed for ten years under the Act, and she says that in those ten years there have been three cases in the Dewsbury Union that were exempted from report under the Act, because of the big premiums paid, but in each of those cases she says she has always been welcomed at the houses, her visits have been appreciated, and she was told that she was at liberty to go and inspect the children whenever she wished; and yet in regard to another case which arises through the practice of sub-letting, where a woman who seeks to trade in the nursing of children, and to make an absolute trade of it, will take these children and sub-let them in single houses outside

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. JOSEPH BROWN.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

the Union. She urges that immediate notification ought to be made compulsory by both parent and nurse, in order that they may be traced. She gives me a case of a child, N., the child of M. R., born at Gomersal, which is in the Dewsbury Union, on August 11th, 1901, and sent to Boston, in Lincolnshire, in which case a premium of £30 was paid, and, therefore, the case was immune from inspection under the Act. It was reported by our Inspector to the Boston Union in November; but there was no Inspector there—that Union had not appointed an Inspector—and the notice came back to our Inspector to say that the Union had none. But the Inspector, who was very tactful, immediately communicated with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Boston, and in the course of about eight weeks they found the child sub-let for a small weekly payment, several lbs. under the normal weight, although it was then under six months of age. That reduced weight was proved to be the result of neglect and bad feeding; because, when the child was handed over to the Union authorities and properly attended to, it regained its normal condition. That child was subsequently returned to the relations in Gomersal, and is now there. In another case, a double case, a woman was convicted and sent to penal servitude from Leeds. It was proved that she took a great number of children under premiums, and sent them out to single homes here and there. Two of those children were sent to homes in the Dewsbury Union, one in Batley, and the other in Dewsbury, at the miserable sum of 3s. 6d. in one case, and 2s. 6d. in the other, per week. Those payments, of course, stopped on the woman's conviction, and the children were afterwards brought to the Dewsbury Union; but to-day we do not know their surnames, and after considerable trouble and expense, we have got them transferred to Leeds under their birth settlements. She tells us of one other case, of the child of E. R., born at Dewsbury, on February 12th last year. After much difficulty, she persuaded the mother to tell what she was going to do with the child. I ought to say that this Inspector of ours devotes all her time to the work of looking after the children; in the case of every illegitimate birth that takes place, she looks after it to see what becomes of the child; children boarded out are under her sole inspection, and the Relieving Officer has nothing to do with them, and we pay her £50 a year. She wanted to know what would become of this child, so she looked after it, and the mother declined to tell her. She said that the child had been sent to relations at Bristol. The Inspector's suspicions being thoroughly aroused, she was determined to go further, so she communicated with the Bristol Union, when the address given by the woman was found to be an empty house, nobody living in it at all; but the Bristol people followed up the case, and in the following month it was found with a person, who was arrested, and tried subsequently at Liverpool, and it was then discovered that this particular child had been handed to these people at a local

Chairman—continued.

station, and a premium had been paid, and they in turn had handed over the child on the following day to a person from Lincolnshire, and this child was found at Boston, in Lincolnshire, sorely neglected, and afterwards handed over to the Union.

Mr. Bright.

301. Was the child with the same woman who was previously spoken of as being at Boston?—No; that is another case altogether. Then another matter that I want to lay before your Committee is that the experience throughout the Unions where inspection is made systematic, is the experience I have given you of this Inspector in the Dewsbury Union, that the Inspectors are welcomed in the good homes, and that the difficulty experienced by the Unions in following these cases is caused through the one-child homes. I have here a letter that came from the West Derby Union from the Inspector there.

Chairman.

302. Do not go, if you please, into too much detail in these cases. You might leave out a sentence here and there and give us the effect of it?—I just want to show you here that in this case the difficulties arise through that one fact, and it is difficult to condense, especially from someone else's report. On visiting a home and chiding the nurse for having the child unwashed at noon, and in a neglected condition, the reply that was given to the Inspector was: "They're best off as takes only one, and has nobody bothering round to see whether babies are washed before eleven o'clock in the morning. I'll take one child only, like Mrs. []; then I can please myself what I do."

303. That is very much to the point?—Yes; that is what I wanted to bring out. When a child is properly treated the Inspector is welcomed in every case. This woman reports, exactly the same as our Inspector, that if the child is in a good home the people like to see the Inspector going there.

304. In short, in a word, you could lay a body of evidence before us, with full particulars if necessary, to support that conclusion?—A whole mass; and I could go further and say that I believe in no case is the visit of an Inspector resented when the home is as it ought to be.

305. Then will you now pass on to the next point?—Then I want to call the attention of the Committee—perhaps it is unnecessary, and yet I want to say it to relieve my own mind—to the fact that in all the cases where painful revelations have been made—and women have been hanged in two cases, the Committee will not forget that, I am sure—they were one-child cases. It could not occur in a double case, because the inspection would prevent all that suffering and misery. I also want to point out to the Committee, if I may, that compulsory notification is absolutely necessary if we are to protect the lives and the health of the children. Nothing less than compulsory notification in all cases would enable the authorities to do their duty by the public and by the children. I noticed that the gentleman who preceded me in this witness chair mentioned that there

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. JOSEPH BROWN.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

there might be provision made for the issuing of certificates of exemption ; but in that case I should like to urge that you must not exempt the notification ; it must be put upon the parent and upon the nurse to notify when a child comes, where it comes from, and when the child goes and where it goes to, if ample protection is to be given to these children. I submit—and in this I am speaking my own mind—that you might possibly exempt certain suitable homes from the periodical inspection, but not from the notification ; that where a child is taken for hire or for pay in any form, there ought to be compulsory notification, so that the authority may know of the existence of the child at nurse, in order that they might keep an eye upon it ; although where application had been made to be exempted from the inspection periodically, it might, in suitable homes, be granted. But I do not believe there would be 1 per cent. of homes that would wish to be exempted if they knew that the eye of the authority was kept upon them to see that the conduct was what it should be. Then I want also to say that in the opinion of all those with whom I have been associated in Poor Law work, the advantage of this inspection is in the preventive work that it would do, not in the detection and punishment of cases ; but we believe, and experience goes to show that it is so, that when these children are out at nurse and are watched in any degree whatever, there will never, or very rarely, be cases that will have to be punished. I have only known of one case in all my 30 years as a Guardian, and that did not arise so much from neglect as from a sudden outburst of temper. In only that one case have the Dewsbury Union authorities had to take proceedings, and that was in the case of a lad of 11 or 12 ; so that it really did not apply. Then I may say that I have noticed that there has been capital sought to be made out of the cost that it was going to put the Guardians to if we were going to have this inspection effective. But I would venture to submit that putting it in that form shows that the persons who put it have in their own minds at any rate a very vivid idea of the evils that are going on. If through inspection the exposure is going to result in an increase of pauperism by reason of these children being handed over to the Guardians, there must be a lot of children who are being treated differently from what they ought to be ; but may I point out that in the cases I referred to from my own Union, where the premiums had been paid and the children sent to Boston, the premium in one case was £30, and I don't know what it was in the other, but the £30 would have kept the child a great deal longer than six months, and yet within six months that child was in the Union. If there had been proper inspection that child would never have been brought back to the Union, because, so far as my experience in the country is concerned, there are always people who are glad to take these children for reasonable payment. I believe that the average sum paid in the Dewsbury Union is about 4s. a week, rarely getting up as high as 5s. a week, and that any number of homes that might be necessary would be found there ; indeed, we cannot satisfy the number of applicants who come

Chairman—continued.

to us as Guardians for children to live with them.

306. Then, to sum it up briefly, you think that the idea of a greatly enhanced cost is fallacious ?—I do.

307. Have you said all that you wish to say as regards the one child homes ? You answer, as I understand, with the authority you have mentioned, the question that is put to us as to the desirability of extending the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to houses in which not more than one infant is kept in consideration of periodical payment, in the affirmative ?—I do, most emphatically. If I may say one word more, our Association has been seeking to get information in regard to the number of cases of injury and hardship in the one-child homes, but we have not been able to get it for you within the time, but there is some evidence that I want to lay before you. I want to say that out of 201 replies that have been sent in, 171 Unions are emphatically of opinion that there is need for this inspection, and out of the 201 Unions that report, 156 cases of injury are reported from these Unions during last year only : 156 cases are reported by 201 Unions. If opportunity is given to the Chairman of our Parliamentary and Legal Committee to come before you later, he will be able to give you far more exhaustive and more reliable particulars on that point.

308. Will you now tell us what you have to say as regards the extension of the age-limit ?—Coming to the question of the age-limit, I want to say that in my opinion the age should be extended to seven years, for the reason that the child goes to school at five, and if there are two years of periodical inspection after the child gets to school, that will ensure the child going to school, and having been for two years at school, it will be known to the school authorities, and so the school attendance will, in some degree at all events, make up for the withdrawn personal inspection. I also want to express my opinion that the Relieving Officer ought never to be appointed Inspector. The appointment of an Inspector, as I have said, ought to be made compulsory, but the Relieving Officer should not be appointed Inspector, for this one reason : that people feel some repugnance to having the Relieving Officer calling at their house.

309. That is your opinion ?—Yes.

Mr. Bright.

310. I think you said that there were comparatively few areas in which inspection takes place ?—That is my experience—that but few Unions appoint an Inspector for this purpose.

311. Among all those Unions that you represent, the Unions in your Association, that is the case ?—Yes, only a few of them appoint an Inspector for this work.

312. Therefore, in that case, the work must be very badly done ?—It is very badly done in those places. I may point out that in the case of Liverpool, where there are two Unions, in the one Union they report to us that they have any number of cases, and in the other Union they say they have very few, or none at all ; and that,

25 February, 1908.]

Mr. JOSEPH BROWN.

[Continued.]

Mr. Bright—continued.

that, undoubtedly, can only be explained by the fact that the cases are not looked after in the one Union, and in the other they are.

313. Then the Act, I imagine, is practically of no service at all, or of very little service, in those Unions where an Inspector is not appointed?—None whatever.

314. In that case of the child that was sent to Boston, and £30 was paid for it, was it an illegitimate child?—It was.

315. In your experience, in most of these cases are the children illegitimate?—Yes, the great bulk of those that come under my personal knowledge are.

316. You think, then, from your knowledge of the facts, that it is really necessary that every illegitimate child should be looked after from the time of its birth until it grows up?—We order that to be done in our Union; that is the best answer I can give you.

317. You say that the lady in the employment of your Union looks after every illegitimate birth, and traces where the child is taken?—Yes.

Chairman.

318. Do you mean that she looks after every illegitimate birth in the Union?—Yes, I do. I mean that the Guardians have ordered that there shall be sent to her a notification of every illegitimate birth, and she looks after it.

Mr. Bright.

319. You think that all illegitimate children are subjected to certain dangers that others are not subjected to, and that from the hour of their birth it is necessary that they should be looked after, and traced?—That is my decided opinion.

Mr. Power.

320. You state that in the majority of Unions connected with your Association no Inspectors

Mr. Power—continued.

have been appointed under the old Act?—That is so.

321. Is it possible that they may, by giving an increased salary to any of their present staff, put the duty on existing officers?—Yes, it might be possible; only I think that the work would be better done by one appointed for the purpose.

322. But for economy's sake they might do it in that way?—I should think it would be better if two or three Unions were to combine and appoint one officer, whose time should be devoted to the duty.

323. Do I rightly understand that the payment of a sum like £30 exempts from all inspection?—That is so under the old Act—anything over £20.

324. Even though two or more children are kept?—No; only in single-child cases. If there are two or three the authority comes in. It is only in the case of single-child homes where a premium of £20 or over is paid.

325. As I understand, whether there is a premium paid or not, where only one child is kept, no inspection takes place?—No inspection can take place where only one child is kept.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

326. Do I rightly understand you to say that the 1897 Act is evaded in this way with regard to children for whom a lump sum has been paid; that one woman, say, will receive £30 or £40, or whatever it may be, and will then pay weekly sums out to some other woman to take charge of the child?—In that notable case in Leeds, the woman did that, and two of those children were so kept in the Dewsbury Union.

327. Therefore it is possible to evade the present Act by dividing a large lump sum up into a number of small weekly payments?—That is so, and it is being systematically done both in the West Derby Union and in the Leeds Union.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Thursday, 27th February, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.
Lord Robert Cecil.
Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Gulland.
Mr. Power.
Mr. John Taylor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JAMES RUSSELL MOTION called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

328. You are Inspector of the Poor and Clerk to the Parish Council of Glasgow ?—I am.

329. How long have you been Inspector of the Poor ?—I have been Inspector of the Poor of the combined parish since 1898, and previous to that I was Acting Inspector for the Barony Parish from 1885.

330. How long have you been Clerk to the Parish Council and Clerk Treasurer to the Lunacy District Board ?—Since December, 1898.

331. Have you been connected with Poor Law Administration in any other capacity ?—As Assistant Inspector and Inspector Clerk, and other offices, for the last 40 years.

332. You speak with 40 years' experience of Poor Law Administration ?—I do.

333. How many children have you in your parish—that is, the Parish of Glasgow—of course, boarded out ?—We have about 2,000 children boarded out, and over 670 chargeable in the Children's Department of the Hospital.

334. What population does that parish cover ?—At the last Census 571,569.

335. Is Glasgow one parish ?—No, the chief portion of the Municipality of Glasgow is in the Parish of Glasgow, but in addition to that there is the Parish of Govan on the south side.

336. I am aware of that. That is another Parliamentary Division, is it not ?—Yes.

337. But the Parish of Glasgow contains more than half a million people ?—Yes.

338. You have come to give us an opinion on the very limited reference to us, which is, of course, whether the Act of 1897 shall be extended to one-child homes ?—I think it should be. I am strongly of opinion that that amendment should be effected.

339. Perhaps you will state what you desire to lay before us, then. How many registrations have you had under the 1897 Act ?—The total number of registrations reported to the Poor Law Authorities since 1897 is 44. Only nine of these had two or more infants ; five had two ; one had three, and three had four infants.

340. How many prosecutions have you had altogether ?—We have had five.

Chairman—continued.

341. Does that relate to the whole time in the Parish of Glasgow since the Act of 1897 came into operation ?—That is so.

342. Only five prosecutions ?—Only five.

343. Will you tell us briefly the nature of those prosecutions ?—The first was in October, 1898, when a man and wife were prosecuted for failing to report three infants, of which two had died. The prosecution failed in respect that two were infants over the age of five years. Then in May, 1906, there were five charges of failing to report receiving, the removal, and the death. The five charges related to three infants. Two of the charges were dismissed in respect that at the time of the prosecution the woman had no other infant ; she was admonished on the three charges. In October, 1906, three infants were received separately for £20, £25, and £35, and the woman was fined 10s. for each offence, six charges, £3 in all—or 14 days' imprisonment. There was a further sentence of 30 days for cruelty to two of the infants, under a different Statute of course. Then on the 18th September, 1907, a mother and daughter were charged ; there were four offences, and they were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. They advertised from different parts of the country under numerous aliases, and received infants for various sums, from £2 to 20s., and immediately thereafter advertised for parties to nurse the children ; they then handed on the infants to such parties, often on the same day as they were received, and promised a large sum monthly, but they never paid it ; they cleared out of the district. We traced no fewer than 15 infants received by them during one year.

344. Do I correctly understand that that is a summary of the only four cases you have had from Glasgow since the 1897 Act came into operation ?—That is so ; only I would like to emphasise a fifth case.

345. You had more than four cases, then ?—We have had five cases.

346. I put it expressly to you : was four the total number ? Is five the total number ?—Five is the total number.

347. Now as to the fifth case ?—A recent case was

27 February, 1908.]

MR. JAMES RUSSELL MOTION.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

was prosecuted for failing to report having received four infants, in consideration of sums of money not exceeding £20 in the terms of Section 5, and of not having reported two deaths to the Procurator Fiscal. The prosecutions showed only six charges, while I was prepared to prove that there had been 31 births in this woman's house, and five deaths, from the 28th of May, 1905, not including one child said to have been born alive, but buried dead immediately thereafter—the day thereafter or thereby—buried as a still-born child.

348. That is a summary of Case No. 5?—Yes.

349. And that completes all the cases that you have had in the Glasgow Parish?—That is so. I wish to add, with your permission, that this newly-developed profession of midwives is having very bad effects.

350. Do you mean when you say profession of midwives, the class of midwives created by the Midwives Registration Act?—No.

351. What do you mean exactly by newly-developed?—I mean women who are certified as midwives, who have really no compunction in what they are doing, who advertise and take in young girls for confinement.

352. But you say it is newly-developed; in what way has it developed—by Statute?—No, it is the character of the people developing this illegal traffic that I refer to.

353. It is quite apart from the Midwives Registration Act passed by Parliament?—Yes.

354. You do not attribute to that Act any development of the profession of these midwives?—None whatever. There are several women who carry on this trade, but not, of course, all to the same extent. The whole business, however, is of such a shady character that everything should be done to put a stop to it, and prevent its springing up again under another guise. I therefore strongly support the terms of the present Bill, both in regard to the one-child homes and the raising of the age to seven years. I have had cases where a midwife carrying on these operations may have had three children in her charge within 48 hours. And, if I may be permitted to say so, I think something should be done to put a stop to a midwife or a nurse or any other person than a medical gentleman certifying that a child has been still-born, with a view to burial. At present it leads to great abuse, as I think from what I have seen and heard, and it lends itself to something approaching a criminal charge.

355. That last point is rather outside our reference. As I understand, your evidence directed to the one-child system and to the raising of the age is derived from your experience in the Parish of Glasgow?—Quite so.

356. You are quite clear that you would answer the question put to us that the Act of 1897 should be extended to the one-child cases in the affirmative?—Yes.

357. And you wish to raise the limit of age?—Yes, to seven years.

358. You have spoken to us from the Glasgow point of view; do you know something of Scotland outside Glasgow?—I do.

359. Do you wish to say anything on behalf of anything outside Glasgow; or do you wish to confine your evidence to Glasgow?—Purely. I

Chairman—continued.

am not authorised to speak on behalf of any other part of Scotland. With your permission, I should like to produce one or two photographs, just for the information of the Committee (*handing in the same*). We give out for adoption children of all ages up to 10, being orphan children and children deserted by their parents, and the Guardians do not object to inspection; indeed they come to the offices and show the babies; and these are photographs of some of the babies who have been sent out to nurse.

360. Now that you have gone on to that, I must ask you to give the numbers?—From six to eight per annum.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

361. I did not quite catch the total number of boarded-out children under the Parish Council?—The exact number at this moment is 1,932—off and on 2,000.

362. Are they boarded out in Glasgow, or in the country district round?—They are boarded out as far north as Tain, and south as Kirkeudbright.

363. Do you find any difficulty in getting satisfactory homes?—None whatever.

364. Are they all inspected?—They are inspected once a year by myself or my assistants, and once a year by two members of the Parish Council accompanied by an official.

365. Are they inspected by people in uniform or by ladies, or by whom?—No uniform.

366. Is the inspection mostly done by ladies or by you?—Both. We have a female officer who is sent to re-inspect if anything is alleged to be wrong?

367. Do you find that there is objection to inspection at all on the part of the foster-parents?—None whatever.

368. Turning to another point, do you think that the limitation of the law at present to homes where two or more children are kept destroys the efficiency of the law?—I think so.

369. You think that more bad cases take place where one child is kept than where two children are kept?—Yes.

370. You said that you were very strongly of opinion that the law should be extended to one-child homes. I did not quite catch what reason you gave for that?—Simply because in the case of the midwives that I referred to, a young woman who is in that condition goes to one of these houses; she is confined there; she hands over £7, or thereby, to the woman in the house. That child is adopted within 24 hours, and no money is handed over with the child. Therefore a constant manufactory is going on as it were.

371. Where do you suggest the child is kept?—The child is kept in, the first place, for from 24 to 48 hours in the midwife's house, and is then handed over to another person, sometimes of very poor condition.

372. But, for a lump sum, do you mean?—No; that is where the mischief comes in. The midwife keeps the lump sum, and hands the child over to the other woman.

373. Have you much evidence of that; you said you had no prosecution?—We have a considerable

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JAMES RUSSELL MOTION.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

siderable volume of evidence, but we could not prosecute under the existing Statute.

Lord Robert Cecil.

374. I want to be quite sure that I follow what the point of about the midwives is. You say that there are these women who take in young women who are about to be confined?—Yes.

375. And the child is delivered in their house?—Yes.

376. And what happens to the child?—It is then handed over ostensibly to nurse.

377. What do you mean by ostensibly?—To nurse, usually means that some allowance is given along with the child; but in these cases the midwives keep the allowance handed over by the parent of the child, and the women go away without anything.

378. But the child goes to another house?—Yes, to another house.

379. What is the inducement to the people in the other house to accept the child?—Sometimes in the form of blackmail. The foster-mother, the other woman who has the child, frequently tries to get into touch with the mother, and it is simply a levy of blackmail. In one case, for instance, the alleged, I should call it, foster-parent, traced the mother of a child who had ultimately become married, and took £20 from the husband and the wife before a lawyer stepped in, and put a stop to it.

380. Then, these midwife cases really amount, if I understand your evidence rightly, to a conspiracy between the midwife and the alleged foster-parents to levy blackmail on the unfortunate women who have been confined?—There have been one or two cases of that kind.

381. I understand that. That would be criminal, of course. But, apart from that, what is the inducement held out by the midwife to what you call the alleged foster-parents?—In one case, an arrangement was made to give the foster-parent so much per week. It was paid for a few weeks, and then the midwife decamped.

382. And have you any evidence that in these cases, the children are very badly treated by what you call the alleged foster-parents?—In one case; but my point is that some of these children are handed over to people who are so poor that they are unable to afford proper sustenance to the infant.

383. I am afraid I do not quite see yet what inducement there is to such people to take the child?—I think that is quite clear. The midwife advertises, and a person appears, she gets the child with a promise, say, of 5s. a week. She goes off with the child and the 5s. in her pocket. The next week she calls, gets another 5s. Then, in the third or fourth week, she appears at the house, and the bird has flown, in the shape of the midwife.

384. Speaking of your 1,932 children that are boarded out, do you get them into respectable homes?—Very respectable homes.

385. What do you allow per week for them?—From 3s. to 4s. 6d. a week; in addition to which we give medical attendance and medicine, clothing, &c.

Mr. Power.

386. As I understand the law at present, it is optional with local authorities to have Inspectors to visit in these homes, whether they have two, three, or four children. It is not obligatory?—I thought it was.

387. We have evidence, I think, that it was not obligatory?—I think the assumption is that it is. However, this is the document we were authorised to send out by the Secretary for Scotland (*handing in the same*).

388. As I remember the evidence given on the last day of meeting, it was stated that it was not obligatory, and that most of the local authorities represented by that gentleman did inspect, but a large minority did not. However, you think it is obligatory?—Yes, I think it is.

389. I want to know what is the principal objection urged on your part against visiting these one-child homes?—I do not think there is any objection.

390. You think that opinion in your part is unanimous on the subject?—I think so. I think every child adopted in the fashion described ought to be visited and inspected.

391. And you do not think there ought to be any distinction in the visitation of those one-child homes as compared with other homes?—I think not.

Mr. John Taylor.

392. Are there a very large number of homes where one child is boarded out, in the Parish of Glasgow?—I could not answer that effectively; there must be a considerable number, but we do not know.

393. To supplement Lord Robert Cecil's question, is there any inducement in child insurance for these people to take over the children?—I have not seen anything of child insurance.

394. Then, in respect to blackmail: you spoke about the mother being frequently blackmailed. Have you any instances where these people endeavour to get to the father of the child, as well as the mother; because that might be an inducement?—No.

Mr. Gulland.

395. You said that since 1897 there have only been 44 registrations?—Yes.

396. Is not that a very small number?—A very small number; the great bulk of these 44 were single infants that people voluntarily came and registered with us.

397. Then you would say that the 1897 Act is practically a dead letter, is it not?—Yes.

398. Have you taken any steps to put it into operation?—That pamphlet which I produced was authorised by the Secretary for Scotland in 1900, 1904 and 1906, and it was profusely distributed and published throughout the parish.

399. Did it not have any effect?—Just immediately after the publication of it it had a little effect; but, nevertheless, we have had comparatively few of the one-child cases.

400. You have only had 44 cases altogether?—Yes.

401. With your Inspectors going round the poor parts of Glasgow, have you not come across more cases?—Yes.

402. Why

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JAMES RUSSELL MOTION.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

402. Why have you not prosecuted them?—Because we could not prosecute.

403. Why not?—Because there is only the one child.

404. Have you not come across cases where there was more than one child?—One or two, but we could not raise a prosecution in cases such as are brought before my notice, because it was an innocent omission. We prosecuted only in cases where, after due warnings, they persisted in disobeying the rules.

405. And you have had as few as five prosecutions in all these 10 years?—Yes.

406. You suggest that this Act cannot be put into force really in Glasgow, unless the one-child home is registered?—That is so.

407. Would you imagine that in other parts of Scotland somewhat similar conditions prevail; that is to say, the number of registrations have been comparatively few?—Yes; I am led to believe that these people are going outside Glasgow, where the Act is becoming rather strictly administered.

408. Who are going outside Glasgow?—These midwives, who are really at the bottom of the whole of the mischief.

409. You mean that you are beginning now in Glasgow to look for that particular kind of case, and they are going to Govan, perhaps, or places in Lanarkshire?—Yes, out of the parish into the surrounding districts.

410. Where the Act is even more casually administered than in Glasgow?—Where it is impossible for anyone to know almost.

411. Why?—Because the neighbours think the child is the woman's own.

412. You mean that they go out with the child?—Yes.

413. But then they do not keep the child very long, do they?—That all depends. I am referring to the midwives leaving the Parish of Glasgow and going out to carry on the traffic outside. These are the people who supply the one child.

414. But if there was any case where the law was being broken, the police would know it, would they not?—Undoubtedly.

415. Then would the police in Glasgow, say, not notify the police in Rutherglen?—In Lanarkshire I should say so.

416. Then these people would be watched there just as well?—Yes. In point of fact, both the police and the Poor Law officers have been watching two particular houses in a given district where the traffic has been so great, getting £10, £20 and £30 for each child, that the women I refer to have been able to buy a small villa.

417. And this recent case that you have given us in the last week or so, will probably make the authorities more vigilant?—Undoubtedly.

418. Would you kindly tell us your system with regard to these 44 cases which are registered? When a case is registered, what do you do?—When the cases are registered—and we register all and sundry—they are inspected by the Inspector of the district.

419. How often does he call?—He may call once a month or once in three months.

420. And then he reports to you if he sees

Mr. Gulland—continued.

anything wrong?—He enters his observations on the register.

421. Is a separate register kept of these registration cases?—Yes.

422. Then about your own children that are boarded out; how do you find suitable people with whom to board them out. Do you advertise?—No; that has grown from 1857 or thereby, but especially since 1885, and we have the assistance of the clergy, the medical men, and the teachers in the district.

423. Do you have no schedule of information or particulars about these homes?—We do not remove children to a home until it has been inspected, and a form filled up and signed by a clergyman or prominent gentleman in the neighbourhood. That is the form for adoption (*handing in the same*).

424. This is a form of application from a person in a country district offering to adopt a child?—Yes.

425. And do people have any objection to filling up this form?—None, whatever.

426. Then after the form is filled up and the child goes, do they have any objection to inspection?—None whatever.

427. You have never had any case of objection?—No; they rather come to the office and show the children with a considerable degree of pride.

428. Because they want to show how carefully they have taken charge of the child?—Yes.

429. And is there any feeling in these districts against a person who has a child to board?—No.

430. There is no social stigma or anything of that nature?—No, I think they are rather looked up to. They are rather the better-off people in the neighbourhood.

431. Then where things are being properly attended to, there is no feeling against people who have a single child boarding with them?—No.

432. These photographs of yours I understand are photographs of your boarded-out children, to show how well they are looked after?—They are photographs of single children handed over by us for adoption.

433. And you show them to the Committee really to show how well the children are looked after?—Yes, and that there is no objection.

434. Do you work always in harmony with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children?—Yes, With all the neighbouring philanthropic societies.

435. You exchange notes with them and they exchange notes with you?—Yes, we do.

436. How do you do about prosecutions; do you allow them to prosecute?—It depends upon who raises the case, or the character of the case; that is mainly in connection with the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They may find cases that do not belong to us at all *quâ* poor law; but we support them with any information that we may have, or any evidence.

437. You said that you were in favour of raising the age from five to seven, but you did not give us any reason; what are your reasons?—Chiefly for the protection of the one child. We had a prosecution where there were two children just over five, and the prosecution failed because these children were over five; and they were merely infants.

438. From

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JAMES RUSSELL MOTION.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

438. From your experience you think it is advisable to raise the age?—Certainly.

Mr. John Taylor.

439. Can you tell us whether the supervision in the country districts is at all equal to the supervision of the one-child home in the City of Glasgow; have you any experience on that point?—I have no experience of any supervision of single-child adoptions in the country, nothing to speak of. What I have referred to in answer to Mr. Gulland's questions was our pauper children who are taken from the poor-houses and boarded out in the country.

440. You could not say that the supervision is stricter in a town than in the country?—My experience is that supervision in the country is far superior to that in a town.

Lord Robert Cecil.

441. With regard to these boarded-out children, has the mother any access to them at all?—As a rule, no; but to encourage the mother in well-doing, one who has fallen away for a time by some mishap, we have a child photographed and a copy sent to the mother; and a goodly number of the children are restored to a mother who reforms and does well.

Mr. Power.

442. I see that I was correct. Mr. Brown stated that so far as England and Wales are

Mr. Power—continued.

concerned it is optional to local authorities to appoint Inspectors, and he stated that in the Unions connected with his Association, in the majority of cases they had not done so. Is it compulsory in Scotland?—You will pardon my answering in this way: Here is an Act of Parliament under which we have to do a certain thing, and I assume that I am to do it, and I do it.

Mr. Gulland.

443. Is not the point that it is optional to appoint special Inspectors, and you do not appoint them?—Entirely.

444. Because, as a matter of fact, there are not enough registrations to make it worth your while to appoint them?—Yes; and even so, I would deprecate special Inspectors, because my own assistants, 13 or 14 of them, are going over the parish every week.

445. And supposing the law were extended, and the one-child homes had to be inspected, if you found it necessary to appoint special Inspectors, you would do so?—Yes.

446. But as you are at present advised, you can do it better with your own assistants?—Yes.

Mr. Power.

447. Is there any register kept of single-child homes?—No, because there are none registered; but a number of the people did voluntarily register.

(The Witness withdrew)

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

448. You are Inspector, I think, under the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, for the Chorlton Union?—Yes.

449. Chorlton, I think, is in Lancashire?—It is a district of Manchester, South Manchester.

450. What area does it cover?—I am afraid I cannot tell you. There is a population of about 380,000.

451. Approaching 400,000?—Yes.

452. How long have you been an official Inspector under that Act?—Since the 9th of February, 1898, about five weeks after the Act came into force.

453. Then you have had 10 years' experience?—Yes.

454. Had you any experience of Poor Law work before that?—None whatever.

455. Then your evidence is based upon your 10 years' official experience?—Yes.

456. Do you answer the question submitted to us in the affirmative, whether the Act of 1897 should be extended to the one-child homes; are you in favour of that extension?—I am very strongly in favour of it.

457. Perhaps you will kindly give us some of your reasons for holding that opinion?—The first reason that I give is, that the Act as it now stands protects only a small number of the children placed out to nurse. I have ventured to divide my experience into two parts. From 1898 until the end of 1901 I was Inspector for

Chairman—continued.

three Unions, Chorlton, Manchester and Prestwich (the whole of Manchester), and I base my statistics on that period rather than on the last six years for this reason, that for the first four years I devoted the whole of my time to inspection under the Infant Life Protection Act, whereas for the last six years I have also been engaged with other Poor Law work. I inspect boarded-out children, and children from the Cottage Homes placed out in service; I inspect the homes to which they are going, and visit them three times a year after they are placed out, and do almost every kind of work that is suitable for a woman to do in connection with our Poor Law administration, so that I have not had the time to make the exhaustive inquiries which I made during the first four years.

458. Then, the first series of figures that you give us relate to the first period?—Yes, to the first four years, 1898 to 1901.

459. Will you give us those figures?—I found 809 children out at nurse, of whom only 167 were nurse children within the meaning of the Act, that is rather more than one-fifth of the total number; leaving a percentage of 79·3 cases to which the Act did not apply—almost 80 per cent. Now, for the last six years I have inspected cases entirely in the Chorlton Union, devoting only a limited time to that work, and I have visited 581 nurse children, of whom 316 were within the meaning of the Act. I should like to point out

27 February, 1908.]

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

that probably all, or almost all, of the cases within the Act are now reported; I do not think there are very many that do not come to the notice of the Guardians, but it is obvious, I think, that by far the greater number of the one-child cases are not reported now. For example, in the first year when I was working for the three Unions I found 231 one-child cases; I say I found them, because a very small number of those cases were reported. That was done by my going practically from house to house.

460. Would you say that the tendency not to report is growing?—Certainly; it is growing very strongly.

461. Why?—In 1906 there were only 25 one-child cases reported; and if you compare these with the 231 which I discovered in the first year, I think it is obvious that the tendency not to report is growing. I find that the people who take the nurse children are quite familiar with the Act now; they often say to me, if I find that it is a one-child case when I go to visit, “I suppose it is a fact that I am not compelled to notify if I have only one child in my care?” I am quite sure that this does not imply evasion of the law, but shows that the people know that they are exempt from notification. Rescue and Philanthropic Societies who place out children, tell the people that they are not required to notify with only one child; though I must say that one society in Manchester makes a point of letting me know whenever a child is placed out to nurse, even in the one-child cases. Even taking the proportion of the two periods, the first four years and the second six years, I have a total of 1,390 children inspected during the 10 years, of whom 65·2 per cent. were not legally under inspection. I think that is a very strong point in favour of the extension of the Act to one-child cases.

462. May I take it from you that you think the evil is growing?—I do not quite understand what you mean by the evil.

463. I mean that you think the want of reporting is growing?—Yes, I am quite sure that it is.

464. And I suppose you consider that that is an evil?—I think it is a pity that they should not be reported.

465. And that is growing?—That is growing, and growing very much.

466. Now will you go to your next point?—I think that if the Infant Life Protection Act is intended, as I believe was stated when the Act was in the making, not so much to put down baby farming as to protect the hundreds of children who are suffering from carelessness and ignorance on the part of the nurses, the Act fails in its object because it does not apply to one-child cases. Of the 192 cases within the Act which I have had under inspection since 1898, 154 have been good, 21 bad, and 17 indifferent; that is 80·2 per cent. good and 19·7 per cent. bad and indifferent; whereas of the 240 one-child cases visited since January, 1902, my second period of work, 72 were good, 58 bad, and 110 indifferent; that is a percentage of 30 satisfactory, and of 70 bad and indifferent. I have a list here of certain unsatisfactory cases.

467. It is a very long list; perhaps without going through it you could summarise it for us?—I

Chairman—continued.

have a large number of cases illustrating the ways in which the Act may be evaded.

468. Will you give us two or three of those illustrative cases?—In 1900 I had under inspection a case of two children who were being nursed for 12s. weekly; the house was dirty, the children delicate; the case appeared to me suspicious; I was practically sure that I was deceived as to the number of people in the house—indeed, I had very strong suspicions as to the character of the woman who kept the house. I could not find anything definite and reported the case to the police, when almost immediately the woman gave up one child, which died within 10 days. I visited the house again without being able to see the woman, as she had removed. I could not find that woman until 1905, when I happened to hear of the death of a nurse child which had been adopted for £7. The child had died of starvation, the doctor refused a certificate, and the case thus came to my notice. I visited the house, and there I found that the woman who had this child was the same one whom I had visited in 1900, and with whom I had been dissatisfied. That brought to light a strong case of baby-farming. A couple in Manchester had been in the habit of advertising in Scotch and Yorkshire papers, asking for a baby to adopt with a premium, and at the same time they issued several advertisements offering a baby with a premium. They obtained possession of at least eight children, of whom the child referred to was one.

469. Have you gone on to a second case?—No, this is the same case; this refers entirely to lump sum cases. In this case, the original adopters got very large sums of money—£64, £20, and £10; and in each case they handed over the baby for a very small sum; so that they made a very considerable profit in each case.

470. And all your assertions with regard to that case could be substantiated, with the names and dates and particulars?—Yes, fully; every case that I quote I can substantiate.

471. Have you another case?—I have a case in which the parents were to blame. The woman who had the children was a respectable woman willing to do her duty, but I think the parents would have been better satisfied if she had neglected the children. Eventually they removed a baby from this woman's care. That baby had been handed to this woman when less than a day old, and the father in that case boasted that this time I should not find it. I found the child a year later in charge of a very feeble, poor old woman, and the 5s. a week paid for the baby's maintenance was all that that woman had to live upon.

472. Now, have you a third case?—I have another case in which a woman who was nursing two children objected to inspection and gave one child up, but as soon as the remaining child reached the age of five years, took another. Another woman had two children, both of whom died in her care; she took another, and again another. Finding that she had two, I went to tell her that she would have to be visited, and she at once gave up one of the children. One of the children in that house, the one that died—I heard from a neighbour's lips, and I believe it to be true—was repeatedly left alone in the house

27 February, 1908.]

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

house while the woman attended a local mothers' meeting, and the child who died of neglect was insured by both mother and nurse. I had another very bad case at a farm, in which the Act was evaded.

473. This is the fifth case?—Yes. I was told that the mother slept in the house. I knew that the nature of this woman's profession would take her away from the house at night, so that her children were not receiving additional protection from the fact that she stayed there; but I have reason to believe that it was for the purpose of evading inspection; the mother and nurse were in collusion and the children were drugged; but I could never thoroughly inspect the case, because I was told by the woman that as the mother slept in the house it was not a case within the Act. Finally, I reported the case to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, when almost immediately the mother removed one child and the nurse handed another over to a neighbour and disappeared to Birmingham. I found one of these children shortly afterwards, dirty, naked, thin, and with all the appearance of a drugged child; the nurse who had her then said that she was doing her best, but the child's condition was hopeless when she came to her. I also heard of a sister of this child which had been very badly burnt and was in a shocking condition. The Society took charge of those children, and I cannot say what became of them after that. I have several more cases. I would like to give you one more. I once had notice that a baby of seven weeks was being nursed by an old woman of 70. A year before, I had found this woman of 70 nursing a baby by the day only, and a girl of five. This girl had ophthalmia, and as it was not a case within the Act in which I could interfere, I brought it to the attention of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. After my report of the year before, they prosecuted this old woman for neglect of nurse children, but at the request of the Magistrate they had dropped the case in consideration of the age and infirmity of the old woman. They persuaded the father to remove the child with ophthalmia; but when I received notice later that a baby of seven weeks was in the house and went to inspect it, I found this girl, now six years of age, back again. The old woman was feeding the baby on bread. She was very humble at first, and said that she would do anything I liked to tell her about the treatment of the child, and that she would not feed it on bread. I went in again the next day, and she was still feeding the baby in the same manner, and laughed in my face and told me I had no authority over the case. I said that I should call again, and I did so, but before I called the child had been sent to the workhouse, where it died. If that woman had been convicted of cruelty to children she would not have been allowed to receive any more; but as she had only been prosecuted there was nothing to prevent her doing so. I have a great number of unsatisfactory cases, but perhaps those are sufficient.

474. How many cases have you given us?—I think I have picked out seven.

475. You have given us seven cases and I have before me a list of 24. You will give further

Chairman—continued.

particulars, if necessary, of all those cases?—Yes.

476. But these seven, I may take it, are illustrative of the 24?—Yes.

477. Over how many years do those 24 cases extend?—10 Years.

478. Extending over the 10 years in your official capacity you could give us 24 cases?—Yes.

479. And that relates to a population of 380,000 people, more or less?—Yes; but I have only picked out the very bad cases.

480. Now, perhaps, you will go to your next head of evidence?—I think I have dealt with my third head in giving those cases of evasion. I have found great difficulty in inspecting cases, owing to the fact that occasionally the mother of one child lived in the house, so that although the woman was nursing two children, she did not come within the jurisdiction of the Act; as I have said before, a woman has occasionally given up one of the children in order to evade inspection, and in several cases I have been told that one child was nursed gratis; of course, it is almost impossible to prove the accuracy or inaccuracy of any of these statements.

481. You think that the limitation of the Act favours, and almost suggests evasion?—I think it suggests it to a woman who wishes to evade the Act. It distinctly points out how the Act may be evaded. I have had one or two cases, in which nurses have pretended to be related to the children—the Act points out that relations are exempt from inspection; but those are not of great importance; they were not very serious cases.

482. Now, will you take your next head?—My next head is also covered by the cases which I have given. Whilst one-child cases are outside the purview of the Act, any person can practise baby-farming, provided that she receives but one child at a time.

483. That is obvious, of course, on the face of it?—Yes, I have cases illustrating that.

484. That hardly needs example, because it must be so?—Yes. My fifth head is that I want to contradict the statement that when cases are under official inspection, the price tends to rise, and it has been suggested that with the price rising, the mothers would not be able to pay for the maintenance of their children, and so it would entail great hardship upon the mothers. I have some figures relating to those first four years, in which I inspected for the whole of Manchester.

485. How many cases did you find in those first four years?—I found in those first four years that 14 nurse children within the meaning of the Act were received for more than 5s. a week.

486. Only 14?—Yes, 14 children, not 14 cases—five cases—but there were 23 cases in which less than 5s. was received. Now since I have inspected exclusively for the Chorlton Union, I have kept a record of every one-child case, as well as the cases within the Act. I have only three cases in which more than 5s. has been received, that is 14 children, out of a total of 307; but in the one-child cases I have one case in which 12s. 6d. was received; two in which 10s. was received; three in which 8s. was received—47 cases in all in which more than 5s. was

27 February, 1908.]

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

5s. was received; and in 30 of those cases 6s. was received, out of a total of 240 children.

487. And how many were received for less than 5s.?—Only 27, out of the 240.

488. Then, what is the general broad inference that you draw from that?—That the cases under inspection are usually cases in which 5s. a week is received.

489. Does inspection tend to raise the cost, in your opinion?—Certainly not.

490. It has no influence upon the cost at all, you think?—None. In my opinion, the one-child cases are cases in which the highest prices are paid.

491. Then, you would say, for whatever it is worth, that the absence of inspection tends to raise the cost?—Yes, decidedly. I should like to add that the cases where the highest prices have been given have been very often the most unsatisfactory cases.

492. And you base your opinion upon actual experience and facts?—On actual experience.

493. Then, what is your next head?—One difficulty in keeping watch over one-child cases is that one very often finds a baby is passed on from home to home, as the mother fails in her payments, or quarrels with the nurse. I have found a great many children handed on in this way. Only last year I found a boy, only a little over five years of age, whom I had inspected five years before as a baby. This child had been in the workhouse, and in four homes in the meantime, and he had deteriorated very much. Now, when cases are registered, persons giving up a child are bound to give the name and address of the person who receives the child; consequently, you can follow the case of a child within the meaning of the Act from home to home, and see that everything is right; but in these one-child cases that is quite impossible. I should like also to say something about the suggestion that more children will be deserted in the one-child cases. Last year only 15 nurse children in the Chorlton Union were sent into the workhouse, and in only three of those 15 cases were they children who had been notified; they were all one-child cases, I should say; but in three out of the 15, the women had notified that they had the children, and two went into hospital through sickness, so that they were *bona fide* cases. I think it hardly falls within the province of the local authority to remove children nursed in unsuitable homes to workhouses, because I feel sure that the number of unsuitable homes will decrease if the one-child cases are brought under supervision. I find that the cases do improve, except where the woman is malicious and wishes to do harm to the child. It is astonishing how regular inspection and visiting improves the whole tone of the home; and it is very strongly my opinion that respectable people do not object to inspection.

I think that where they resent inspection, as a rule there is something very suspicious about the case. If I visit a woman, and find her a little resentful, I usually find that this wears off at the second visit, or at the third at the latest. Last year I asked a great number of women in charge of one-child cases—every house I went

Chairman—continued.

into for a certain time—whether they objected to inspection, and in every case the woman told me that she preferred it.

494. You would say probably, from your experience, that inspection is regarded very much according to the tact and discretion with which it is carried on?—Very much so. I think that many of these women are under the impression that a policeman is coming to see them, and when they find, as in my case, that it is only a woman, all the fear disappears and we are soon good friends; indeed, my difficulty is to get out of the houses very often, they are so anxious to give me the whole family history and to show me all the things they have bought for the children, and all the mother's letters, so that I think the inspector and the people in charge of the children may easily be upon the best terms. I can safely say that I have not had half-a-dozen cases within the Act where my inspection has been objected to. And I should like to point out that often a woman who is losing one of her nurse children will invite me or ask me to come to the home to examine the baby before it goes, lest that child should deteriorate after leaving her care. It has also been suggested that the mothers resent inspection of their babies; this again is contrary to my experience. Several cases in which the Chorlton Guardians have prosecuted were brought to light through the information of the mother of a child nursed in the house—a mother who was afraid or unwilling to remove the child herself, but wished for somebody in authority to do what perhaps I might call the disagreeable part of the work. I have had a great many requests from mothers in the first place to recommend a home in which they could place their babies; and, secondly, to visit the children when they are out, and to write and let them know how the children are going on. This, of course, does not apply to cases of indifferent mothers and indifferent nurses: naturally they do not want to be visited.

495. All that you have been laying before us relates to and is founded upon your ten years' official experience in the Chorlton Union with the population that you mentioned?—Yes.

496. You have resided in Lancashire during that time?—Yes.

497. Is that an illustrative Union, may I ask?—I should think it is.

498. As regards an urban district, of course, I mean?—I should think it is entirely illustrative of an urban district. For instance, in the Prestwich Union, which represents North Manchester, almost all the children were at nurse by day only; those would be the children of married women employed in mills or of single women employed in mills.

499. Now, as to the limit of age. Have you anything to say to us on that point?—I think it would be a pity to insist upon extending the limit of age. I would rather waive the point than raise opposition. My first idea in recommending it was that occasionally I have come across cases in which one child was over five years and one, perhaps, under 12 months, or cases in which there were two children under five years, and when

one

27 February, 1908.]

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

one attained the age of five years the case presumably ceased to come within the purview of the Act, and, consequently, the remaining child was deprived of all protection. I think, however, if the Act definitely stated that once a nurse-child, a child remained a nurse-child up to five years of age, whether he or she remained the only child in the house or not, that would meet my view better than raising the age limit. I think, too, the Act ought to state definitely at what age inspection should cease—perhaps that is very much the same point, but I have had cases of evasion in which I considered that with only one child in the house I was not entitled to visit. I may say that usually I continue my visits as long as even one child is under five years, but I do it by the courtesy of the nurse, and in hardly any cases has it been objected to.

500. Does that conclude all that you wish to lay before us in your evidence-in-chief?—I should just like to say that I see no reason to limit the Act to illegitimate children. On the occasions when children of married people are put out to nurse, it very often means that one parent has been prosecuted for cruelty to children or that the parents have quarrelled.

501. I am not quite sure that I appreciate what point you are on now?—A circular was sent out a short time ago by opponents of the Bill, asking whether it was proposed to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate children, and something was said about the children of widowers and widows. I do not think the Act should be altered in that respect. If a child is at nurse, I think it should be inspected whether the parents are married or not. I might say, in conclusion, that we have had 10 prosecutions during 10 years, and obtained a conviction in every case.

Mr. Gulland.

502. You gave us figures to show that in the two-child homes the cases are very much better looked after than in the one-child homes. What do you think is the reason for that?—I consider that the regular inspection is the reason.

503. But you told us that you inspected one-child homes?—Not in the same way that I inspect cases within the Act; it is obviously impossible.

504. Do you put that as the sole reason?—No, I think that when people are quite aware that they are going to be visited and inspected, naturally they must be people who are willing to do well to the child, or they would hardly bring themselves within registration.

505. In regard to prosecutions; you had 10, I think you said?—Yes.

506. Were those cases which you found had not been registered?—Almost all. There were perhaps four in which death had not been notified to the Coroner.

507. Do you think that you pretty well covered the number of cases?—No, there were several others in which offenders were brought before the Guardians and cautioned against a repetition of the offence.

508. Were those cases that were come across through your house to house visitation?—Yes.

509. Then, supposing there had not been a

Mr. Gulland—continued.

system of inspection?—In my opinion the cases would never have come to light.

510. Would you put it that in a place like Manchester there is a necessity for a special Inspector?—Entirely.

511. Have you ultimately traced these one-child home cases?—No, we find it almost impossible.

512. You do not know what happens to them when they leave the nurse?—In some cases some children remain a considerable time, and I know of a few cases where the women have had a child for seven or eight years; but I find when an illegitimate child has been carefully nursed for a year or two the grandparents usually take it. If the child is nice and well developed, in two years, when the shame has blown over, the child very often goes to its mother's home.

513. When it has come to an interesting age, and they are quite glad to have it?—Yes.

514. Do you think there would be any difference in that respect if the child were under inspection for two or three years?—No, I think there would be no difference. I know that women who have nursed the children well regard it as a great injustice that they should take such care of a child for four or five years and then lose it.

515. You think that inspection of these one-child homes would not ultimately prejudice the career of the child?—I think it would have no effect of any kind so far as regards that.

516. But you think that it would improve the condition of the children because they would be under inspection and therefore better treated?—I do. I consider that a plump, nice-looking child very often gets much kinder treatment than one that needs it more.

517. With regard to the Prestwich Union, where the mothers are working in the mills, you said that it was almost entirely day nursing there?—Yes.

518. Are there not many cases where the child is kept for two or more nights?—Speaking from memory, I do not think that I had more than three cases altogether where two children were nursed; and all the lump sum cases in the Prestwich Union were over four years of age. There were several cases where the child was kept at night, but a very small proportion compared with those in the Chorlton Union.

519. In the Prestwich Union you were not visiting the single-child cases?—I visited them if I found them, but I was struck by the fact that there were so few children.

520. Was that due to the fact that you did not make such an exhaustive visitation?—No, I think it was due to the nature of the population—that most of the women there seemed to be employed in day work, in mill work.

Mr. John Taylor.

521. I take it from your evidence that there are few cases in which married people put a child to nurse in that way for a lump or a weekly sum?—Very few, I should say—with both parents living, you mean?

522. We have had evidence in one case that people with children of their own take these one-child

27 February, 1908.]

Miss FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Mr. John Taylor—continued.

child cases. Would you think that in such case the child meets with equal treatment with the own children?—In some cases, yes, and in other cases, no.

523. But which would preponderate—the good cases, or the bad cases?—Those cases are amongst the most difficult. In my experience, a woman thinks that one more or less does not make any difference, and so a child is taken in, and neglected, through no evil intention. It is taken into a house where the family is already quite large enough; I may say that in one of those cases I found a nurse-child sleeping in a room with the nurse, her husband and child, a woman lodger and her child, and a male lodger. I have had several cases of one-child homes when a child has been taken into a home where there was not sufficient room.

Mr. Power.

524. Do I rightly gather from your figures that the majority of children placed out to nurse are placed out in one-child homes?—Yes, the large majority.

525. And, consequently, there is no inspection at all?—No, except by the courtesy of the nurses. I gave the percentage in my first four years as 79·3.

526. Might I ask you, so far as the Lancashire feeling goes, is there any hostile objection to inspection of these one-child homes?—I should say that there is none.

527. You do not know of any?—I have never heard it opposed in Lancashire.

Lord Robert Cecil.

528. In your figures for the first four years, you say that 79 per cent. of the cases were not within the Act; does that include lump sum cases?—Yes, and cases in which two or more children were in one home, but, perhaps, one child was over five years of age, or the mother of one child was in the house, or one child was a relative of the guardian. I have divided that again in a little table attached to my *précis*. I divided the children within the Act into cases where more than one child was received, and lump-sum cases under £20; and the other division contained one-child cases and lump-sum cases over £20—children in homes where more than one child is nursed, and children nursed by the day only, or gratis.

529. Of course, the lump-sum cases do not affect this particular inquiry?—There were only 10 above £20.

530. So that it makes very little difference in your figures if you leave those out?—Yes.

531. I wanted just to ask you about some of the cases that you gave; I did not quite follow that they would be affected by anything before this Committee. For instance, in the first case you said that the couple made a practice of advertising for children at a premium?—Yes.

532. Those would be lump-sum cases?—Yes.

533. Those would not come into this inquiry?—Not into the discussion of the one-child cases. I have had lump-sum cases in which the woman received the child for a certain sum, and then put it out to nurse for a weekly payment, a

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

delicate baby, in one or two cases, which died. I had one case very early in my experience, in which the mother sold her baby for sixpence.

534. Then I did not quite understand the force of your case about the old woman of 70. You said that if the old woman had been convicted, she would not have been able to do it again?—People who are convicted of an offence against children are not allowed to take nurse-children.

535. That has nothing to do with the one-child case?—I assume that they would be prevented from taking even any one child.

536. I understand. Then, you said that inspection does not raise the cost. It has been often suggested that there are quite a number of cases in which one child is taken as a matter of friendship, and not as a matter of business at all, by some relative of the mother, and that the mother pays a small sum towards the maintenance of the child. Is that in your experience?—As a rule, those have been the worst cases. Those are the cases in which the nurses are very old women, or women with plenty of children of their own. I had a case where a woman consented to take a child for 3s. 6d.; she could not keep the child for that money, and went out charing every day, taking the child with her in a bassinette. When that child died—it had been a fine healthy baby—it only weighed 6½ lbs., although it was almost six months old. When the Coroner asked the woman how she expected to take the child and find everything for it out of 3s. 6d. a week, she said that she took it out of pity for the mother in her trouble. I have always said for obvious reasons that a friend of the mother is not the best nurse for an illegitimate child.

537. But at the same time would you or would you not see objection to all such children being sent to the workhouse?—I see a very strong objection. I do not see why it follows that they must go to the workhouse. If one-child cases were under inspection the price would hardly be affected. If a woman who was not a suitable person received a child out of friendship for the mother, surely the mother, if she loved the child at all, would be the first to see that she must remove it. The burden of removal should be on the mother of the child, and it should not be a duty imposed on the Guardians to take it into the workhouse. I cannot see the force of the contention. I think that very few women originally take a child from motives of affection; the affection follows the good treatment of the child and the improvement in its condition. Women make no secret to me that they take a child for the sake of the money; as the phrase is, “It pays the rent.”

538. But it is, in fact, in your view, almost always baby-farming in some form or another?—Decidedly baby-farming, without using the word in an objectionable sense.

539. It is a business, in fact?—Yes.

540. And not a matter of affection for the mother?—Very rarely.

541. And in your view respectable people do not object to inspection?—Not in the least.

542. It all turns upon that, does it not?—Yes, I think so.

543. I

27 February, 1908.]

MISS FRANCES ZANETTI.

[Continued.]

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

543. I want just to follow your observation that you would not like to see the Act limited to illegitimate children. Are you referring to some compromise that has been suggested?—I am referring to a question that was asked in a circular. “Do you distinguish between legitimate children and illegitimate children, and what do you propose to do with regard to widowers’ children?” That, I think, was the question.

544. And you say that you see no reason for confining whatever the provision is. You think it ought to be extended to legitimate as well as illegitimate children?—Yes.

545. You said you did not so much care about the limit of age being raised provided once a nurse-child always a nurse-child?—Yes.

546. Of course, if all one-child cases were subject to inspection that would be so?—Yes. I think if the Act is extended to one-child cases the raising of the age limit is immaterial.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

547. You gave us the numbers that you inspected while you were acting for the whole of Manchester, and you said that only one-fifth of those cases came really within the Act. Do you reckon that you inspected anything like the whole number of the children who were out to nurse?—No.

548. You only inspected those who voluntarily notified you?—No. Very few notified in the first four years. I said that in the six years I only inspected those who voluntarily notify or whose cases I heard of from other information.

549. But you do not think you have anything like covered the ground?—No. Taking the 25 one-child cases reported in 1906, it is not to be supposed that they represent the number. I think that now I do find most of the cases within the Act, but I do not suppose that I find 25 per cent. of the others.

550. You do not think that you find 25 per cent. of those cases which are outside the Act?—I do not think I do.

551. Do you think that you find the worst cases or the best cases?—I should say a few of the worst cases, sufficiently bad to provoke outside attention from neighbours.

552. But a certain considerable number of those outside the Act that you inspect are the better class who voluntarily ask you to inspect them?—Yes.

553. Therefore you cannot be said to cover the bulk of the moderately bad cases outside the Act?—No, I do not suppose I touch the fringe of them.

Chairman.

554. You have an interesting table here which gives rather more in detail the figures upon which

Chairman—continued.

your evidence has been based. I think you might put that in?—Thank you. (*The same was handed in, vide Appendix No. 2.*)

Lord Robert Cecil.

555. You said that the children that were most highly paid for were often the most unsatisfactory?—Often.

556. Could you give us any reason why that should be so?—I think a wish for concealment on the part of the parents.

557. So that they do not look after the child, do you mean; or that they are too ready to take the first offer?—I think that very often the woman who nurses the child takes her cue from the parents.

558. She sees that the parents do not care about the child?—If the parents do not particularly wish the child to live, the woman’s first inducement is gone. Not always. Sometimes it acts in a contrary fashion. A woman will say to me, “Yes, I know she would like it to die, but it will not die while it is with me.”

Mr. Gulland.

559. With regard to the point that Lord Robert Cecil put to you about a friend of the mother taking the child, you gave a case in which the child was very much neglected. Was it not a pity not to allow that child to go to the workhouse; so far as the welfare of the child is concerned, do not you think it would have been better for the child to go to the workhouse and then be boarded out with people who would look after it?—I am strongly against putting a premium upon parental neglect and diminishing parental control. I think the aim ought to be to get the mother to put the child into another home. It would be much better for the child, of course, if every child of these neglectful parents were brought up by the State; but that is not quite the point, is it?

Chairman.

That point is not referred to us.

Mr. Gulland.

560. Could you tell us what ultimately happened to that child who was sold for sixpence?—It went to Birmingham; beyond that I do not know what happened to it. A large number of children born in Manchester in the first years that I inspected, were sent to various parts of the country. That was perhaps rather extraordinary. I found that children were sent to London, Crewe, Derby, Buxton, Cheltenham, Wales and Ireland, and I am inclined to think it was in order to evade inspection.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Mr. JESSE JAMES SIMPSON called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

561. You are, I believe, Clerk to the Guardians of the City and County of Bristol?—Yes.

562. The City of Bristol is a County like Nottingham?—It is a County Borough.

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Chairman—continued.

563. How long have you occupied that position?—Since 1887, but previously to that I was in the service of the Guardians as Assistant Clerk from 1875.

564. Then

27 February, 1908.]

MR. JESSE JAMES SIMPSON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

564. Then you have had 33 years' experience as Clerk or Assistant?—Yes.

565. What is the population of Bristol?—It is now about 368,000.

566. And what is the area?—17,000 acres.

567. And it is with that experience that you have come before us, and it is relative to that place and population that you speak?—Yes.

568. Perhaps you will tell us what the Guardians of Bristol have done in the matter of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897?—On the passing of the Act, in 1897, they appointed two ladies to act as inspectors under the Act. The area of the City is divided between the two inspectors, each being responsible, in her particular area, for visiting and inspecting the children notified as required by the Act, and also to inquire in the various streets in all portions of the area as to what children are placed out and notification has been omitted. For instance, in the year ending Lady Day, 1907, the two Inspectors reported to the Guardians that they had visited 8,165 houses in 649 streets with a view to ascertaining whether children were placed out in homes and notification had not followed. In the course of their daily investigations the Inspectors have found very many cases where a single child has been received. In April, 1900, they reported that they had in the two previous years discovered 319 children placed out with persons other than parents where notification was not required. In the following year they reported that they had obtained information as to 121 children so placed out in the year. In 1902 the number was 200 non-notifiable cases.

569. Let us have this quite clear. When you say 1902, you mean in the Guardians' year ending April, 1902?—Yes.

570. Your year ends, I know, at Lady Day?—Yes, and the report is made in April. In each year they stated that although they had no legal authority to take action, they had succeeded in securing the removal of many of these children to better homes, because of want of care or improper treatment or actual neglect, and that in the cases of actual neglect and ill-treatment they had communicated with the officers of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. I may say that the Guardians subscribe to that Society, with a view to their taking a prosecution if any cruelty is proved. I have eight typical cases here, but they are by no means all the cases that I could give you.

571. Let me interpolate here what I did not say to you, as I have to the other Witnesses: You are aware of the reference to this Committee—the two points?—Yes.

572. And your evidence is directed to those two points, of course?—Yes, all I have said at present refers to the non-notification of single child cases. The figures that I have given refer to cases which have not hitherto been within the Act.

573. Now will you give us two or three illustrative cases?—A delicate child was taken by a woman for 2s. 6d. a week. That woman drank, and the child was half starved and always dirty. After much time lost through not having power to act, the Inspector procured the removal of the

Chairman—continued.

child to the Children's Hospital, where it subsequently died.

574. That is your first case?—Yes; this is all prior to 1902, because I am leading up to the action then taken. My next case is that of the child of a person who drank and took it to the public house; it was subsequently removed, and is now doing well.

575. What is your third case?—A boy of a year and nine months was found in a half-clothed, dirty and starving condition, and although it was a year and nine months old it weighed only 13 lbs. Information was given to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, who prosecuted, and the woman had six weeks' imprisonment. Those are three cases. I have five others if you wish to have them.

576. Those are illustrative cases?—Those are really illustrative cases.

577. And the whole eight could be multiplied, I suppose?—Undoubtedly.

578. So that you have a large number of cases the facts of which could be substantiated and are within your knowledge as an official?—Yes.

579. Now will you tell us what action has been taken by the Bristol Guardians as the result of those cases?—In view of those facts the Guardians, in May, 1902, petitioned the House of Commons in favour of the Infant Life Protection Act Amendment Bill, of which the principal points were that the Act should be extended to all cases where a single child is taken, and that the age limit should be raised to seven years.

580. Those are our two points?—Yes.

581. Your Guardians were emphatically in favour at that time of that change in the law?—Entirely. In 1904 they were also in favour of the same thing, and addressed their Members of Parliament urging them to support the Bill, which was introduced again in that year. They took the same action in 1905, when the Bill was again introduced.

582. And again in 1906?—Yes, and again in 1906, they petitioned the House of Commons direct in favour of the same two points.

583. May I take it that they have always assumed the same attitude?—They have.

584. Were they practically unanimous, or was it a majority and a minority?—I think in each case they were practically unanimous, except one, when the division was a very large one in favour. I could give you the figures if you wished.

585. Then in 1907 they took certain action?—In 1907 the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws invited the Guardians to send written representations on any points connected with their duties, and in reply they included a clause suggesting the extension of these two points.

586. Can you now give us some figures with regard to the operation of your two Inspectors? How many children have they under their care notified?—At the present time they have 118 notified children under their care and inspection. 53 are cases where lump sums have been paid, and 65 are cases of two or more children in separate homes. The number of homes in which the 65 children are placed is 30.

587. Have they any information as to the children

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JESSE JAMES SIMPSON.

[Continued]

Chairman—continued.

children outside the purview of the Act, and if so, what?—Yes, within the last year, up to the 31st December, 1907, they came across 139 children who were apparently paid for, but notification was not required. Of course the information they obtained as to those children was somewhat vague, as they have no right of inspection; they simply discovered them in the execution of their duty in going round the City with a view to ascertain whether all notifiable cases had been duly notified. Although they could not obtain very reliable information as to the whole of them, in 12 cases there seemed to be reasonable ground for suspicion that the homes were not satisfactory or that the treatment was not satisfactory, and in those 12 cases they either influenced the mothers to remove the children, or they made representations to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, who took action. I have the particulars of the 12 cases if you wish to have them.

588. Will you just give us three or four of those cases?—The first case is that of a child found repeatedly tied up in a chair in an empty room, and the neighbours generally complained of the neglect of the woman in whose charge it was placed. The second is a case where the child was apparently neglected, the foster-mother being given to drink. The other cases are similar to that; I can give you more if you wish it.

589. I see that there is a great similarity in the cases. They resolve themselves into cases sometimes of cruelty and always of neglect?—Yes.

590. Those are illustrative cases?—Yes.

591. And there is no doubt that you could give the names and dates and full particulars on your official authority?—Yes, I could do so.

592. Have the Inspectors any view with regard to the cases outside those 12, of the 139?—The information in their possession is not sufficient to enable them to form the opinion that the whole of the 127 are really properly cared for; they have no right of entry into the homes, and can simply form an opinion on information from the neighbours, and from seeing the children themselves and so on when they can get a sight of the children.

593. How many children became chargeable to your Guardians in 1907, because of desertion and neglect of the mothers to pay to the foster-mother the agreed sum for maintenance?—Eight.

594. What is the total number of children that you have now chargeable to the Guardians?—We have about 30. The number was 28 when I prepared my evidence last night. Those are chargeable now, but the total number that we have had thrown on our hands since 1898 would be double the 30 probably.

595. 60?—Yes, because a number have been disposed of in various ways.

596. That is about six per annum in the 10 years?—Yes.

597. You had eight last year?—Yes.

598. Is the number increasing or decreasing?—I do not think the number is increasing; it varies.

599. In view of these facts, I suppose we may take it that the view of the Guardians is what you

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Chairman—continued.

have indicated by their petitions and their resolutions?—Yes, they strongly advocate that single-child cases should be subject to notification and inspection.

600. Have you anything to say with regard to the age limit?—They think that the age of seven is sufficiently low to be fixed as the minimum.

601. Would they alter it from five to seven—that is the point?—They urge that the age limit should be seven and not five.

602. They would alter it?—Yes.

603. That is one of the points we have to consider. They are in favour, I gather, of an alteration of the age-limit from five to seven years?—Yes. I can give you one case where a child over five was taken, which was consequently outside the old Act, and was shockingly neglected.

604. Do you state that on your own information?—Yes.

605. Your evidence is based on Bristol?—Yes, entirely.

606. Is Bristol in Somerset or Gloucestershire?—It is a City and County by itself.

607. But what county is it in?—It is really in no administrative county.

608. I was going to ask you, as a resident in the district, do you consider that the conditions in the county or the adjacent country are at all comparable with those of Bristol, or are the conditions of Bristol exceptional?—I do not think you can compare a rural area with a town area like Bristol; a town area is entirely different.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

609. With regard to the limit of age, does not the School Attendance Officer come round in the cases of children over five years of age?—Yes, that is so.

610. Is not that a sufficient guarantee as to how the child is being looked after? If a child is kept away from school would not the School Attendance Officer want to know the reason why?—That is so; but the power of inspection would not be so complete as that which would be given to the Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act, I imagine.

611. But the visit of the School Attendance Officer would give some guarantee?—He would require to satisfy himself that the child was unable to attend through sickness or some other cause.

612. That would mean a medical officer's certificate, would it not?—Not necessarily.

613. The School Attendance Officer would be satisfied without a medical officer's certificate?—Yes, on personal inquiry.

614. With regard to the cases which are outside the Act, I understand that there were 139 in 1907?—Yes.

615. Have you any reason to believe that those are all, or anything like all, the cases?—I think they are undoubtedly not all; that is simply the number that have come within the knowledge of the Inspectors in their inquiries. None of them have been notified direct; they have been ascertained by the officers in going round.

616. Are the bulk of them illegitimate children?—The great majority are illegitimate.

617. Do you take any steps to find out what happens to all the illegitimate children that are

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JESSE JAMES SIMPSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

born within your boundaries? We were told by one Witness that all the illegitimate children are reported to the Visitors, who then take steps to find out what becomes of them. Do you do anything of that kind in Bristol?—No, we have no power to do that, except in so far as they come within the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act.

618. Therefore you do not think that these 139 cases are anything like all the cases outside the Act?—Certainly not.

619. Do you think that the administration of the Act, which is fairly vigorous, is driving cases outside Bristol or not?—No; on the contrary, I am told by the Inspectors that the type of home has considerably improved as the result of the operation of the Act within the last 10 years. Certainly there are fewer unsatisfactory single-child homes now than they discovered in the earlier years.

620. But are there less cases altogether; are the baby-farmers being driven out of Bristol into the surrounding districts?—Yes, the baby-farmers are, decidedly, because they come under the Act and have been notified, and several bad cases have been dealt with.

621. Do the Bristol Guardians do any boarding out on their own account?—Yes, we have more boarded-out children than any other Union, I think. We have 140.

622. And of course you inspect all those cases?—Yes, those are all placed under duly constituted Boarding-Out Committees under a regulation of the Local Government Board, and ladies residing in the district are responsible for the care of those children; they do not come under the operation of this Act.

623. I was wanting to find out whether inspection is objected to. Who does inspect those homes?—Lady members of the Boarding-Out Committees.

624. Not official Inspectors?—No, the Guardians are not supposed to intervene when the children are once placed under the Boarding-Out Committees.

Lord Robert Cecil.

625. When you board out these children do the parents ever come to see them?—We can only board out orphan or deserted children under the regulations of the Local Government Board. We have recently been able to board out children who have been adopted under the Poor Law Acts of 1889 and 1899, but obviously the parents would not be permitted to go and see those children.

626. As regards the age limit, do you think that the fact that children are now to be medically inspected at school makes any difference?—I think there will be less need to raise the age limit now than there was in 1902, when the Guardians first urged it. At the same time I think that seven years is quite low enough.

627. In most of these single-child cases is it a matter of business or a matter of affection should you say?—Undoubtedly in the great majority of cases it is a matter of business. It is a very great help to a poor couple if they have 3s. or 4s. coming in regularly every week; it is sufficient to pay the rent. I think undoubtedly

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

that all cases are taken as a matter of business originally, and love and regard for the children grow afterwards.

628. I did not mean love and regard for the children, which obviously would not grow at first sight, but affection for the mother or a desire to help her?—In the great majority of cases the foster-parents are absolutely unknown to the mother.

629. Then do you find in those cases which are subject to inspection, that the foster-parents object to inspection?—No; the better type of foster-parents with a single child do not object at all. Of the 139 cases that I speak of, many are regularly visited by our Inspectors, although they have no right to go and inspect them; and the better type of foster-parent is perfectly willing to be inspected.

630. Do you say that many of the 139 are visited?—Yes.

631. I thought you told us that you had no information about any except 12?—I am sorry if I conveyed that impression.

Chairman.

That was quite my impression.

Lord Robert Cecil.

632. I thought you said that as regards the 127 you had no sufficient information which enabled you to say whether they were ill-treated?—With regard to every one of the 127 I wish to say that we have not full information, but many of them undoubtedly the Inspectors are allowed to visit. The better types the Inspectors undoubtedly visit.

633. Can you tell us at all how many they have visited out of the 127?—I should say something more than half. In the other cases it is very uncertain whether they are bad enough to pass on to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

634. But they do not let the Inspectors in?—No.

635. Can you tell me at all the proportion of children in single-child homes as compared with the number of children sent to homes where they receive more than one child?—The number actually notified where there are more than two children in one home is 65 now.

636. Have you any idea how many children there are in single-child homes?—The only information I have is as to the 139 that the Inspectors have discovered.

637. You think that does not include all the cases?—Undoubtedly it does not.

638. So that there would be many more children in single-child homes than that?—I should say that 139 was a somewhat small proportion of the total number.

639. You said that a great many cases of ill-treatment of single-child cases have come before you. Can you tell me at all what that number is?—In 1907 the number was 12 out of the 139. I think I can give you the number for each year if you would like it.

640. I think I should like to have it?—In the year up to Lady Day, 1906, the number was 24.

641. These

27 February, 1908.]

Mr. JESSE JAMES SIMPSON.

[Continued.]

Chairman.

641. These years always end on the 31st of March?—Yes, except in 1907, which I have taken out specially for the year from January to December, so as to be up to date.

Lord Robert Cecil.

642. What was the number in 1905?—Six.

643. And in 1904?—Seven.

644. And in 1903?—I am afraid the Inspectors did not report the number for 1903; they simply stated that there were a number.

Mr. Power.

645. Are you aware of any volume of opinion in your part of the world against inspection of one-child homes?—I am not aware of any opinion against it, but I know that most of the Agencies in Bristol which deal with children of this sort are in agreement with the Guardians that single-child cases ought to be notified.

646. Then you are not aware of any volume of opinion against inspection?—No, on the contrary, they are all strongly in favour of it.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Tuesday, 3rd March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.		Mr. Ellis.
		Mr. Gulland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mrs. ROBERT PEEL WETHERED called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

647. Will you please tell us in what capacity you come as a witness ?—I represent my own Association, the Paddington and Marylebone Ladies' Association.

648. What is its title, what are its functions, and where are its operations ?—The title is The Paddington and Marylebone Ladies' Association for the Rescue and Care of Friendless Girls ; our Refuge is in Lisson Grove, and we work through Paddington and Marylebone.

649. Is that a philanthropic association ?—Yes.

650. With a list of subscribers ?—Yes.

651. And a Committee ?—Yes.

652. You have perhaps a copy of the Report, have you ?—No, I did not bring one with me, but I can send you one. We have a President, a Vice-President, Honorary Treasurer, and a Working Committee.

653. Which meet from time to time ?—We meet once a month. We have an open-all-night Refuge, and we divide ourselves into different bands of workers. There is one band of workers to deal with the cases ; I am one of those, and I have been working personally amongst girls for 26 years. We started 26 years ago. I also represent the views of many who signed the Memorial.

654. Where is the sphere of your operations ?—Through Paddington and Marylebone.

655. What population does that represent ?—I could not tell you that. We work with the workhouses, with the Lock Hospital, with Queen Charlotte's Hospital, with the Police Court missionaries, with the Church Army, and we get girls in all sorts of ways, and it is a case of dealing with them one by one.

656. Your sphere of operations is not restricted, then, to the particular places you have mentioned ?—Not to Lisson Grove. Our Refuge is in Lisson Grove, but anybody in Paddington or Marylebone can ask us to help a girl.

657. But you do not go outside Paddington or Marylebone ?—No.

658. Whatever the population of those districts is, that is your field ?—That is our field for work,

Chairman—continued.

but we take in cases for other people, if they ask us to, who do not belong to Paddington and Marylebone. We want to help girls ; we do not restrict ourselves, but that is the area of our work. If we did any street work, for instance, we should not go beyond Paddington or Marylebone. If anybody asked us to take in a friendless girl from any part of London we should not say, "We will not have this girl, because she does not belong to Paddington or Marylebone."

659. From every part of London ; does it extend outside London anywhere ?—Yes, we have had cases sent to us from the country to help. Our idea is to help.

660. Do you mention any other Associations with which you are connected besides the one you have been dealing with ?—Do you mean that I represent here to-day ?

661. Yes ?—I think I might say I represent Associations like the Main Memorial Home, and, like a great many others who cannot come personally, I signed that Memorial to Mr. Samuel, and I think I may say I represent the views of all the rescue workers who signed that Memorial.

662. If I may use a colloquial expression, that is rather a large order, because we have had before us one witness who wishes his name to be withdrawn from that Memorial. Can we take it from you that you are authorised by the people who signed that Memorial ?—I shall come presently to that, but I can tell you who helped to give me their evidence.

663. What I want is rather more specific than that ; in the first place, have your Committee authorised you to come here ?—Yes.

664. Outside your Committee, have you any other authorisation at your back ?—I do not quite know how to answer that, because some of those who have signed have helped me with my evidence—people like Mrs. Bonham Carter, Mrs. Windham Baring, Mrs. Herbert, Lady Phillimore, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Thorpe. They have all been very interested in my coming, and have helped me. I cannot say that I am authorised by them.

665. We have to be very careful on these Parliamentary

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

Parliamentary inquiries; may I put it at its highest that you think you represent their views?—Yes.

666. Will you proceed with what you wish to lay before us? You remember the terms of reference to this Committee are very limited; it is the one-child system and the raising of age?—Yes, and my first point is that the bringing of one-child homes on weekly payment under the present Infant Life Protection Act will produce greater evil than good, and that the present evils can be better dealt with, so as to mitigate them, as far as possible, by other means. I should like to say first that we all know the miseries that go on amongst some of the homes of the poor, and we all long to mitigate these evils; we only disagree as to the proposed remedy. Those of us who are opposing the extension of the Act to the one-child homes on weekly payment do so because we believe this particular Act is not the right Act to strengthen in this way. It is hoped by those who are wishing for this alteration that if this clause were added they would eliminate the criminal and the cruel foster-parents, and the ignorant and neglectful foster-parents. We believe that this would not be the case. As I understand the Act, if this clause became law to-morrow the authorities would have no right to send an army of Inspectors from house to house, and from room to room, in the big towns, and find out what women ought to be on the register. The responsibility of making this Act a living Act, not a dead letter, would be thrown on the women. They must ask to be put on the register, and to be officially inspected. We believe that the women who are going to take children with criminal intentions will not ask to be put on the register, and we believe that they will make themselves secure by calling themselves grandmothers or aunts. When they have done this they are outside the Infant Life Protection Act. We believe the only way of dealing with criminals is to strengthen the criminal law, and now that all these Acts are being codified and amended, we believe it would be quite possible to strengthen the criminal Acts. We believe you might give more power, perhaps, to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; you might give similar powers to other bodies; you might give more powers to the police; you might strengthen the punishment against these criminals; but we do not think that the Infant Life Protection Act is the right Act. Then, with regard to the ignorant class, the ignorance is not confined to the foster-parents; the ignorance belongs to the whole class from which the foster-parents are taken. The only way to dispel ignorance is education, and here we do not think the Infant Life Protection Act is the right Act. It is quite true that in London, and some places where very carefully chosen Inspectors are appointed, they are most kind and good women, and they are most willing to teach as far as they can; but relieving officers, ordinary Inspectors, have no knowledge of teaching women how to bring up their children, and we know that in some great towns there has been a very excellent system of Health Visitors, which is now being started in London, and we believe that strengthen-

Chairman—continued.

ing that body would do much more towards dispelling the ignorance than adding this clause on to the present Infant Life Protection Act, which, after all, was passed originally to deal with a certain class of baby farms, which it does deal with very well where it is properly worked. So that we believe that if you add this clause to the present Infant Life Protection Act you will do a great deal of harm and very little good. I thought I might take my next two points together: That the homes where one child only is taken on weekly payment are our best homes, and that the inclusion under the Act of these homes will diminish their number; and that, while foster-mothers welcome inspection by the mothers of the children, and by those who pay or guarantee payment, they, and more especially their husbands, object to official inspection and interference, which brings upon them the opprobrium of being called Baby Farmers. I think before I begin to speak about these homes I had better make it quite clear to the Committee which foster-mothers I am speaking of. The term "single-child-home" is a most confused term, and the public without exception, and I was surprised to find those who gave evidence last week, mix up four classes of single homes together. There is one class of foster-mother who takes in a child with a lump sum down. That class of foster-mother is already under the Act. There used to be a limit of £20 which has been taken away now, I am glad to say, and therefore every foster-mother who takes in a child with a lump sum down is under the Act. She has nothing to do with this clause, and therefore I am not going to speak about that class at all. There is another class of foster-mother, a relation who takes in a child on weekly payment. Under the Act relations are exempted. Therefore I need not speak about that class. There is a third class where a foster-mother has taken a single infant. The mother of the child has paid for it for a certain length of time. The mother leaves off paying, and throws the child on the foster-mother's hands. From the moment the mother leaves off paying that child ceases to be under the Infant Life Protection Act. Therefore that class of foster-mother would not be affected by the clause; they must go to the Poor Law Guardians. It is no good going to the Infant Life Protection Act, and they must go to the Poor Law Guardians and ask them to relieve them of their burden. Therefore I need not speak about that class. Now we come to the fourth class, which is the one class I am going to speak about, and that is the class of foster-parent who receives a steady weekly or monthly or periodical payment, and that is the only class of foster-mother who will be affected by the proposed clause. Here I state that the homes where one child only is taken on weekly payment are our best homes. We employ, of course, both; we cannot get enough of the single foster-mothers; we employ a great many of the homes under the London County Council, and the foster-mothers are very good, but we would not compare them to our one-child homes. The foster-mother belonging to the one-child home is of a superior class. As a rule she is a married woman

who

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

who either has lost her children, or her children are grown up, or she has no child and wishes to have a child. These are ideal homes for the foster-children. There is the husband earning good money, bringing in his wages ; there is only the one child for the wife to look after, and they are our very best homes ; and that is the class of home which will be swept away. I can say this from experience, because, as you know, up to 1897, when a foster-child was 12 months old, the foster-mother could take in a second child. In 1897 the age was raised to five years. Before the age was raised we had a good many foster-mothers whom, when the first child began to toddle, got to two or three years old, and we found she had taken care of it, we asked her to take a second child and she said, "I like having a little baby, I will." Then we had another class who would perhaps take a baby for us temporarily ; we would say to her, "Look here, Mrs. Smith, we have got a baby we do not quite know what to do with ; we cannot find a foster-mother, will you take it for us for two or three weeks ?" and they would say "Yes." When the age was raised to five all these good foster-mothers, with very few exceptions, sent back one child because they did not wish to come under official inspection, and the women who had taken babies for us temporarily said their husbands would not allow them to do it again. Therefore we lost all those good homes then. We used to have quite half and half. Now we have, I think, 40 foster-mothers and we have only 10 single homes amongst them, and those 10 we should probably lose if this clause became law. Last week, for instance, a very nice young woman came round to our Refuge and said she had no children and her husband had given her leave to take a little baby and could we let her have one ? We were only too thankful, as we had one in particular that we wanted a home for, and all the arrangements were made after seeing the mother of the child herself. Then the next day she came back and said : "My husband says I am to find out if this means I am to come under official interference, because, if so, I am not to have the baby." We told her No ; that at present she could take it without coming under official inspection. Then she said : "You know, Matron, you may come whenever you like ; you will be very welcome." I do not know if the Committee will see the point of that. The difference is this—the Inspector who is appointed under the Act is bound to go unawares, to pounce down upon them and go at any time that suits her time. Our matron, on the other hand, if she found the woman was in the middle of cleaning, or if the husband was taking his dinner, would say, "I will come another day" ; and she would go by invitation of the nurse-mother, which is quite a different position. The reasons given in every case are the same. One woman said, "My husband says he is not going to have the bother my neighbour a few doors off had ; that poor man came home to his dinner, and in came the Inspector, and lifted up the lid of the pot to see what he was going to have." That may seem a very small matter. Another said : "My husband will not let

Chairman—continued.

me do it because I will be called a baby-farmer." There is no great reason against it, but it is simply a feeling that they do not like being interfered with, and they do not like official inspection ; and, of course, when there is a weekly payment going on, speaking generally, the person paying the weekly payment does inspect. Very few people pay regularly without seeing that their money is properly spent ; the very fact of a weekly payment guarantees, as a rule, some form of inspection. That is my first point, that an Association like my own would lose our best homes if this clause became law. The next one is that the home where the girl herself places her illegitimate child, with a friend or neighbour anxious to help her, often belongs to this class ; and that it is a better home for the infant, even though the surroundings may not be up to the official standard, on account of the kindly personal feeling for the child ; and better for the mother of the infant, because it brings her more in touch with the child and under better influence than can be the case in a baby farm. I think here, if the Committee would allow me, I will give three cases ; I am not fond of giving cases, but I think it is the only way I can illustrate what I mean. One case is this. There were two women in a maternity hospital ; one was a married woman, and the other a single girl. The married woman said to the girl : "Where are you going when you leave the hospital ?" The girl said : "I do not know. I have nowhere to go to ; I cannot take my baby home, and I have nowhere to go to." The married woman said : "Look here, give me your baby ; it will not give me much more trouble to have two to look after than one, and when you get work you shall pay me 3s. a week." She took the baby, and the girl did get work, and she did pay the woman 3s. a week. And I should like you to think what would have happened to that girl if this kindly woman had not done this. The girl would have gone out without a penny in her pocket, and she would have had three courses open to her : she could have gone to the workhouse, but she would not do that ; she could have deserted her child, or she could have led a life of sin to keep it. If this woman had asked to be put on the register I should say that under the Infant Life Protection Act, the Inspector would have been bound to say that it was not a proper home. You see the woman was too poor to have a baby in her own house ; she had her own child she was bringing back to her husband, and children, and I think the Infant Life Inspector would have said : "This is not a fit place for a foster-child to be placed in." That rather represents a class. A great many of these girls do place their children in what are not ideal homes, but they belong to the same class as the girl belongs to herself. That is an example of a very poor home. We must remember that it is not only the very poor girls we deal with. I have personally dealt with every class of girl in trouble, and there are different circumstances. The case I have just cited was a poor class of girl. She only earned £14 a year—and I got her the place. She came to me after she had placed her child—I did not interfere with her arrangements, but I got her a place, and she was not worth more than

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

than £14 a year, so that she could not have paid the official sum of 5s. a week out of it; it would have been absolutely impossible. Here is another class, also poor. I got this letter a few weeks ago from the mistress of a girl. She says, "I think it will please you to hear that B. is to be married on New Year's Day to a very respectable young man, the son of the woman who takes care of her child. I have seen him and talked with him as to his duty to the child. B. while in my service has been a very good girl in every way, and I feel sure she will make an excellent wife." Now that girl also was sent to me, after she had made all her arrangements about the child; she was then absolutely penniless, and was getting into debt with the nurse-mother. I asked her where her child was, and she told me it was with a friend of her cousin's, and she said this friend allowed her to go there on Sundays and when she was out. It was at this foster-mother's house that she met the son, and she married him last January. That was a sort of home where the foster-mother did not take the baby because she wanted to be a baby-farmer and have a succession of babies.

667. It is hardly necessary for you to enlarge upon it; we quite appreciate the cases, because we have all the points in our mind?—I have given you a poor case and a middle case, and now I would like to give you the case of a superior class, one who belonged to the professional class. She also was brought to my notice when she was in the lowest depths of despair, and almost on the verge of suicide, and I found that her child was placed with the nurse who had nursed her, and that it was everything to this girl that it should not be known what had happened. To her the shame of it was intolerable, and the horror of her own family knowing what had happened was beyond words great. I was able to help that girl make a start; she is now earning over £100 a year in her profession; she paid up a debt of £8 which she owed to this foster-mother, and she is now paying 7s. a week for her child. That is the case of a girl who would have been driven into absolute despair if she had been told that she must only take her child to a registered foster-mother.

668. Those are three illustrative cases; could you multiply them?—Yes.

669. I take it from you they could be multiplied within your experience?—Certainly, after 26 years of work it has been my difficulty how to condense. My next point I need not say much about, because I think others will do it much better than I can: it is that the home in which a widow or widower boards out his or her legitimate infant belongs to this class of best homes. I do not think the public really have the slightest idea how this clause would enter into the lives of most respectable and worthy people. As a matter of fact, if a married woman or a widower or a widow places two children out to nurse, they are under the present Act; but it so seldom happens. If a widower is left with a good many children, as a rule he has a housekeeper; if a widow is left with a good many children, she cannot afford to place them out at 4s. or 5s. a week each, and she keeps the home together, as they say. But

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Chairman—continued.

if a single child comes under the Act, others will be affected in the most extraordinary manner, and it will annoy all these people a great deal more than they have any idea of. I would like to give an instance now of a case where two children were put out; I will not read the letter, but it is from a friend of my own who lives in a country village. She knows all the poor people, and she heard that one poor woman had suddenly been found in a pool of blood, having injured her head, and my friend had her carried into her coachman's cottage, and she was nursed. The two children could not walk, so that a good neighbour took them. They were living opposite, and they were paid for each child 4s. a week. The father brought the milk every morning from his cow; the mother had them brought to see her in the afternoon. The relieving officer, who was acting as Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act, heard that this woman had the two children, and he came down upon her and said, "You ought to have registered yourself; you are liable to a fine of £25 or six months' imprisonment." My friend, who knows all the Guardians, went and represented the case to them, and said what a monstrous thing it would be to fine this kind neighbour or to send her to prison, and she was let off with a warning that it was not to happen again. That is a sort of interference which would come into the homes if you gave one little child out to be nursed. I need not enlarge upon that, because, as a rescue worker, it does not really come within my province. My next point is that cruelty and criminal neglect are rarely found amongst foster-mothers taking one child only for weekly payment; or, indeed, amongst any foster-mothers. So that I looked up our records (we keep very careful records), and I asked a few ladies and gentlemen who signed the memorial to give me their records. Those who gave me their records were Mrs. Bonham Carter, Mrs. Windham Baring, Mrs. Herbert, Lady Phillimore, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Thorpe and myself. We took five years' records. The number of our foster-mothers is 396.

670. These other people have authorised you to lay this before us?—Yes.

671. Over what area does it go?—This is over different parts of London.

672. All Paddington and Marylebone?—No, different parts of London. I did this merely to strengthen my own knowledge; I knew it, but I wished to have it strengthened, and the number of foster-mothers we put down is 396; cases of cruelty, none; cases of neglect, 7; girls known to have deserted their babies, 10, out of 1113. You see, of course, for rescue workers, our one object is the reform of girls; our whole work is a work of reform, and we find that the more you can throw responsibility on the girls, the more you can make them realise their duty to their children; the more you can make them struggle, the better women they become.

673. We appreciate these things; we have lived in the world for many years, and you need not enlarge much upon those points; the figures are very interesting and valuable?—Of

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

course, you will not care for this at all, but I have also letters from Mr. Baker, of the Church Penitentiary, and from Miss Gregory.

674. Will you give us the purport of them; you are authorised to read these letters?—Yes; they were given to me for the purpose. “I have not met with one case of either cruelty or neglect in any home where one child only has been taken for weekly payment. On the other hand, I can report several striking instances of painstaking kindness with little or no pecuniary benefit on the part of foster-mothers. I have met with no cases of cruelty.” I can recall four cases of desertion connected with my own immediate work; two children thus left by their own parents have been adopted by the foster-mothers and maintained out of their poverty. Mr. Baker says: “I write to you and give my views in regard to the Infant Life Protection Act. I have been engaged in Penitentiary work for the last 34 years. I can only recall one instance where a single child was received, in which a foster-mother was unsatisfactory, and none in which there was cruelty or neglect.” I am laying a little more stress upon this, because I have been to a great many meetings, and have heard a great deal said about the cruelty of these foster-parents, and I feel it is only just to them to give the opposite side. From Mr. Maddison I did not ask for evidence, as I thought he would be represented before the Committee, and he has many maternity homes.

675. I do not want to be too strict, but when the witnesses are here, they must confine themselves to their own evidence; as to these letters you read, we really strictly should have had the writers here to be cross-examined if necessary. Do not mention people's names unless you are really authorised by them, and they are ready to come here?—I think they would come.

676. Before you pass from that, I should like to ask you this question: this is five years' record of these seven ladies and gentlemen over London at large?—Yes, it is—those of us who have maternity homes, because it is no use going to people who have no maternity homes. The Main Maternity Home, Mrs. Bonham Carter's, is the oldest maternity home in London.

677. Will you proceed to the next point?—That it is not easy to find suitable foster-parents now, even in the case of Poor Law Guardians, who guarantee payment. That the tendency of official inspection is to raise the weekly payment. As far as I can gather, these good foster-parents are not very easily found; you require extremely nice women to be foster-mothers, and after 26 years of work amongst them, I think it is wonderful how those who take children do for them; but we have great difficulty ourselves in finding the right sort.

678. That comes to the end of your notes, I think?—No. My next point is that a large number of women putting their illegitimate children out on weekly payment cannot pay from their own earnings as much as 5s. weekly, the usual charge at a baby farm. The point is, who is to pay; and these women who are only earning £14 a year, seeing that the official charge is always 4s. and 5s. a week, absolutely cannot pay it in full, it is prohibitive.

Chairman—continued.

Therefore we have got to face the question who is going to pay—that is the question. There is great difficulty in obtaining contributions from the father of the child towards its maintenance, we have only 50 men contributing towards the support of their children; and I think all Poor Law Guardians will tell you how difficult it is to prove the fathers and get contributions from them. If once these children are put on the rates we shall get no more help from them. We know that a certain class of homes where children are now taken by friends for very small weekly payments will disappear; the lowest sum I have ever known paid is 2s. a week to a friend—I believe some other workers know of 1s. 6d., but half-a-crown is very usual if a friend takes a baby. We believe that the bringing of these homes under the Act will oblige Guardians to undertake the part or entire cost of maintenance of illegitimate children, because under the Infant Life Protection Act there is no fund like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children have got; an Inspector cannot say, “This is a bad home; I will put the child elsewhere, and pay the difference”; the Inspector must take the child to the workhouse, and having got the child into the workhouse, the Guardians at present are bound to find the mother of the child and put her in also. Having got her into the workhouse, you cannot keep her there; at least I do not know of any power of detention; and therefore the next day the girl may take her discharge with her baby in her arms and quietly deposit it on a doorstep and desert it. We believe that if you make the law so drastic you will stop all the private arrangements of people, and weigh so heavily upon these girls that you will increase desertion, which is bad enough now, to an enormous extent. Of course, I am speaking from the moral point of view, and we believe that if the Guardians take the responsibility, it will habituate men and women to the idea that the State is responsible for these children, and the safeguards of morality will be directly weakened thereby. We believe that if an Inspector can go into a poor home and say, “These surroundings are not good enough for this illegitimate foster-child; we will take this child out of this poor home, and we will put it into a much better home,” the obvious inference is that this bad home is good enough for the legitimate children but not good enough for the illegitimate child, and therefore is a direct premium on immorality. We think it is a most serious thing to do, and we believe that in adding this clause you will be creating a great deal of fresh crime. We believe that if the anxiety of mind, which those of us who are working amongst these girls understand, is increased and you make them desperate, you will drive them to abortion or desertion, and even suicide. It means creating crime, and there are many girls (I am running through all my points together) who, rather than come under the Poor Law and submit to the consequent publicity, will retain their infants in their own hands and lead lives of sin to support them. I know that is true; I know that there are a great many girls who, rather than go to the Poor Law authorities

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

authorities and have to state their whole case before them, will do this. I know what the effect of this clause would be on the minds of many girls, and that is really the reason why I oppose it. It is on the ground of morality.

679. I see that the official figures relating to Paddington and Marylebone give the population as 282,000 persons, say, 300,000; that is the population within which mainly your Association works?—Yes; you see we work in connection with the Paddington and Marylebone Workhouse, with Queen Charlotte's Hospital, with the Lock Hospital in the Harrow Road, with the Police, with the Church Army and District Visitors, and girls can come and apply themselves. We are rather a big organisation, but our work is very quiet work and not work we wish to advertise.

680. May we take it that so far as your knowledge goes, although you can speak to us more particularly with regard to these two districts, the conditions in Paddington and Marylebone would be much the same as elsewhere?—Yes; it is human nature.

681. Of course, 300,000 is not a very large proportion of the 5,000,000?—I have had to do with all sorts and conditions of women, and have gained considerable knowledge of human nature and girl life.

682. Your evidence is based on your work over a quarter of a century or more and your connection with this particular association?—Yes, and I have studied this question very much. I am very much interested in this work amongst girls and children, and my one desire is to do my best for them, and therefore I have studied the question, looking at it from all points. I think people generally look at it from a rather narrow point; they look at the baby and admit that it should be well taken care of, but they do not stop to think of the tragedy behind the baby.

683. You mean that some people do not?—I mean the public. "Infant Life Protection" sounds a very beautiful thing and people say: "Let us put all the children under the Infant Life Protection Act and they will be safe." But I do not think they will be safe.

684. Have you anything to say as to the age limit?—I do not care much about that, but it seems to me to be rather absurd. Infant life means infant life, and at five years old the child goes to school and comes under school inspection, and the new medical inspection in elementary schools.

685. That is all you have to say really?—Yes, and I think it is a very unnecessary waste of money.

Mr. Gulland.

686. Your evidence seems to go on the basis that the two-child home is bad?—No, not bad.

687. At any rate you admit that the inspection there has done good?—Yes; I should say that the Infant Life Protection Act was framed to look after a certain class of baby farms, viz., where more

Mr. Gulland—continued.

than one child is kept, and that is, of course, a trade. I think it is a perfectly legitimate trade, and it is very well carried on now in London; but if a woman takes three, four, or five children at 5s. a week each there is a good income. It is a trade, and you must see that she does not make too much profit out of it and give too little to the child. With the single homes, taking the ordinary run the profit is so little that other motives come in, the love of the child and the friendship to the mother of the child, so that it is done in quite a different spirit.

688. These considerations only sometimes come in; it is a trade if there is one child just as much as if there are two?—Not as much. I suppose it is a trade in a sense wherever profit comes in; but the other is a distinct trade. The single child, of course, may be taken for profit, and I do not say it is not; but, on the whole, I think even the evidence goes to show that the record of these women is very extraordinary. I was astounded at the statistics which I heard last week, I have been told so often that foster-mothers behave so badly. If I heard the figures aright there were 2,097 out of all England in four years of foster-mothers who have been summoned, and 40,000 in one year of married people. It seems to me that the foster-mothers really come out much better than the married people.

689. You said that you worked with different associations?—Yes.

690. Why could you not work with the Inspectors that might be appointed under the extended Act just as well as with these other bodies?—We do work with the Inspectors; we have a good many homes under the Inspectors and we work with them certainly, but they send up the price of maintenance.

691. At present you talk about these things being done quietly and so on. Does that mean that out of the funds of your association you pay part or all of the boarding expenses?—Oh, no; we make the girls pay for themselves, and we inspect ourselves. The inspection is done by our matrons or by ourselves, and therefore it is not official inspection.

692. I cannot see how a foster-mother should object to a lady visiting merely because she was visiting under the orders of a Board of Guardians, any more than she should object to your inspection?—It comes in a different way; the official Inspector has much more official authority. For instance, if I went in and I found a woman's house all upside down, I should say, "I will come another day."

693. Would not the official Inspector do the same?—I do not think she could; time is money with the official Inspector; and another thing is that the duty of the official Inspector is to try to find if there is any case of cruelty or neglect, and the more she jumps down upon them unawares the better. Our matron Inspectors are most kindly people, and if you had an Inspector without tact she would be most annoying.

694. The reason of your inspection is exactly the same: to see that there is no cruelty?—We take a great interest in the children, and we do give the girls a helping hand if they are out of place. Therefore there is the sort of feeling that

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

we are helping to pay, and to see that everything is properly done; but we do not inspect those nurse-mothers the girls have found for themselves, and we leave them to do that. After all, the mothers of the children who are paying have a certain responsibility.

695. Your Society does nothing in the way of paying, and in that sense you have no right to inspect?—I will not say that always; we do very often give a pound for the first month, so that the girl may start clear; but we never make ourselves responsible for the payment, and we always make the foster-mothers understand that. Of course, we could not, as we should not have the money.

696. You do not have any cases where the visits of your Society have been objected to?—No, they like us to go, and they are so proud of the babies. The foster-mothers bring the babies to the refuge for us to see.

697. Do you not think they would be equally proud of the babies if another kind of Inspector went?—Quite so, if you could make it worth their while; but we do not worry them as official Inspectors do.

698. Why should the official Inspectors worry, if they found everything right?—Quite true, but it is quite a different spirit that they do it in. I cannot explain the spirit, but I think you would know if you could hear the women say how their husbands disliked it.

699. Do you send children to the country at all?—In some cases. We always try to keep the children in touch with their mothers, and if we get a girl a place in London, we try to keep the child where the mother can visit it; and very often the foster-parents are a great help to us, because if a nice motherly woman gets the child she can teach the girl a good deal.

700. You say that your work, which has been extremely valuable, is all in the interests of morality, and that you are afraid this inspection will cause desertion and will weaken the sense of responsibility, and so on; but I confess I cannot see the reasoning of that. It seems to me that at present you are relieving responsibility. You say it has been your object to help these girls, and therefore to make things easier for them?—We try to strengthen their characters; to make them see their responsibilities; to make them deny themselves, and it is a very hard struggle to pay as they have to pay. You see many of them could not pay the full official payment. I am speaking now not so much of our association—because we do help—but I am thinking much more of the girls.

701. What is going to be the difference?—The higher pay, to begin with.

702. It does not necessarily mean higher pay?—It always has been and is. Take even the Permissive Order given in 1905^{for} for the guardians to be allowed to pay an extra shilling a week. When I began work foster-parents would take a child for 3s. 1d., while now no foster-parent would take one from us under 5s. The women under the London County Council continually come round to us and say: "We are told we ought to ask 6s. or 7s. a week." For

Mr. Gulland—continued.

the Poor Law Guardians there was this Permissive Order, to which I have already referred, of which I have a copy here, allowing them to give an extra shilling a week, and that is entirely the result of official inspection. I now hand in the Order (*handing in the same*), although I suppose you have seen it. Official inspection has, therefore, sent up the price, and my point is this: that if you interfere with these girls to such an extent that you say, "We shall not allow you to put your child with a friend who will take it for 2s. or 2s. 6d. a week, unless that friend will come under official registration and inspection," and the friend refuses to come under that, as a great many would, what is the girl to do with her child? She cannot pay the official price, and who is to pay it? Somebody must pay it, and, therefore, as the Infant Life Protection Act only has the rates to come upon, it seems to me the answer is: "The rates must pay." I do not see who else is to pay.

703. Suppose this extension were made, your Society would still find plenty of work to do?—I am not thinking of my Society, which is such a very small thing; I am thinking of the girls who do not come to our Society.

704. You would still have plenty of scope to help these girls?—Yes, but I think you would strike a deadly blow at our teaching, which is that men and women are bound to keep their children. If the law tells the parents, No, the rates are bound to keep those children," I think you strike a deadly blow at the spirit of our work.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

705. You put in some figures just now showing 396 foster-mothers, in connection with whom there had been no case of cruelty. I suppose these foster-mothers are taken from all over London?—Yes, practically; they are the figures of these seven maternity homes, and they are necessarily all over London.

706. Are they selected foster-mothers?—Oh, yes.

707. And they are all inspected?—Either by the mothers themselves, or by Societies. Those we are referring to are good homes.

708. Therefore, they are all homes that were selected, because they were supposed to be good?—Certainly.

709. I understand you to say that the mothers are left to inspect in many cases, if the mothers make the arrangements, but the mothers are out at work?—Yes, but still they must pay the money, and they must go round and take the money to the foster-mother. Whoever pays it must see that the child is alive and not ill-treated.

710. You think that in a great many cases the mothers do inspect?—In a great many cases, decidedly.

711. You said just now that it was not easy to find good foster-parents?—No, it is not; of course, we are in the same position as officials in that way. The girls who come to us to find foster-mothers, have no one they know.

712. Does it not seem to show that there is need of inspection of foster-mothers, if you, with

all

3 March, 1908.]

Mrs. WETHERED.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

all your facilities, find it so difficult to find good foster-mothers?—What is to be the result? Is it to be huge baby-farms? You have to look at what it is to lead to.

713. How many children do you deal with in the course of the year?—I should think about 80 to 90 maternity cases, besides many other girls.

714. Do you board out practically 80 cases a year?—No, I should not say we boarded out so many; we only board out a certain number. We pass a good many of our girls into other maternity homes; we help one another.

715. What number do you board out in the course of a year?—I should think, about 40, and the other 40 we send to other homes.

716. I understand you to say that the 1897 Act has had a good effect in improving the two-child homes?—I am sure it has, a very good effect, and it has been very well worked in London.

717. I suppose you would be prepared to say with regard to the bad one-child homes, that this amendment would improve them?—That I am not so sure of; I think it would be so largely evaded, and it would create so many fresh sins, that I am very doubtful about it.

718. Your difficulty largely, as I understand, is that you are afraid official inspection would

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

not be as tactful as the inspection by your own officers?—That is one reason, but it is not that only, because a great many of the Inspectors could be taught; but I think it is the attitude of mind which is different. The husbands in these good homes of ours do not mind a friendly visit, but an Inspector goes by right.

719. Does not your Inspector go in by right?—Myself?

720. Whoever is inspecting?—To a certain extent, but it is rather different; they ask us to come. The health visitors go round, and say, "May I come in?"

721. So that inspection by somebody of the type of a health visitor would not be so objectionable?—No, because the health visitor would go to married homes and all homes.

722. That is a possible way out of the difficulty?—Yes, much the best way, in my opinion.

723. Do you pay surprise visits to the homes?—Yes.

724. So that you do, in fact, go when you are not expected?—Yes; if you guarantee payment, or if you represent payment, naturally the women all recognise that the person who is paying has the right to inspect, and there is a great feeling in that way.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Lady ST. HELIER called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

725. You desire to lay before us some evidence based on your personal experience?—Yes; but my personal experience is not very recent, as I think I explained in writing to you the other day, because the home of which I speak, and of which I had the management, was closed in 1899, although since then I have seen a great deal of some of the inmates of the home, and have kept in touch with those girls who wanted help.

726. How long was your home in existence?—From 1875 to 1899, or very nearly 25 years.

727. Where was it situated?—In Carlton Road, Kilburn.

728. What was the number of inmates?—We took in about 45 women.

729. Were they drawn from all parts of the country?—Yes, they principally came from the workhouse, and it was originally started in connection with the work I did in the Lying-in Ward of the Marylebone Workhouse, which I began in 1872.

730. How long would an inmate continue in your home?—It entirely depended on the case. First of all it was only four women with a first child, and we took them in before their confinement, kept them for a time and sent them to Queen Charlotte's Hospital, and they came back to us when they left the hospital and remained with us until we got them a situation and started them again.

731. I rather wanted to get an idea of the

Chairman—continued.

number who passed through your hands in these 24 or 25 years?—I have been looking up my books and although I have not got them all now, roughly I should say that we had between 1,200 and 1,500 women through the home with their children in these years. Of course I have lost sight of many of them, but still I have kept in touch with a great many of the women.

732. That is the experience on which the conclusions you wish to lay before us are based?—Yes, and I think that having had probably 1,400 women and 1,400 babies in the home, whom I, in nearly every case, had to find homes for, one has had some experience of what is the best thing to do.

733. Will you please now give us your conclusions?—What I should like to say first of all is with regard to the question of cruelty on the part of the foster-parents. I have been looking very carefully through my books as far as I can go back, and I have not been able to find one case of cruelty or ill-treatment by a foster-mother of any one of the children they had. I must tell you that in very nearly every case we found the homes for the children; the mothers sometimes had friends who took them, but in most cases we had to find the homes, and as we found most of the girls situations in London, we tried to find the homes for the children also in London, so as to keep up the influence of the mother of the

3 March, 1908.]

Lady ST. HELIER.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

the child over the child. I cannot find in looking through my books any one case of cruelty. I found several cases where the children had to be moved from the women they had been put with, because they did not thrive, but that was mostly because they were badly fed or rather over-fed, and we had to move them to other women who understood the case of the children better. When the girls could find foster-mothers to take the children, we were very glad that they should do that, because it saved us a good deal of trouble. It was always very difficult to find suitable homes, and we had to be most careful where we sent the children to. Sometimes the mothers found homes, but generally we had to find them ourselves. We had an inspection by the matron of the homes where the children went to; she found the homes and was very careful about their being respectable places, and from time to time, when the homes were within easy distance of our home, she used to visit them. Very often she had to go a further distance to make quite sure that the children were doing well. The foster-mothers always welcomed her visits, and were very glad to see her. We did what we could to find respectable and well-to-do women with tidy homes. We found that it was very desirable to be sure about the homes the children went to, not because the children were not taken great care of, but we found that where the women were nice and kindly women, they were such an enormous help to the mother of the child. Very many of them were real friends to some of the girls who had situations in London and who had no friends in London; it was of course extremely undesirable that they should walk about the streets and find amusement there, and after they had got a situation, when they had their Sunday out, they would go and spend the afternoon with the child and have tea with the foster-mother. Many of my girls have told me that the kindest friend they had ever had in the world and the person to whom they owed more than to anybody else was the woman who had charge of their child, because she had really been a friend to them. I have not brought any cases with me because I did not think it was necessary to do that, but I have got many old letters which I can send in if you like to see them, where the girls have spoken with the greatest affection of the kindness they received from the foster-mothers of their children. There was another thing we found very useful. Sometimes these girls did not keep their situations long, as they got very poor situations to begin with and very low wages, and girls who have had the training and lived the sort of life these girls have done, do not settle down very easily again into places, and we were glad to find so many of these girls spending so much of their time between being in one place and another with the foster-mothers of their children. They would remain there until they went to another place, so that in reality these foster-mothers became very great friends to these girls and had a very kindly and very good influence over them.

734. Of course you are aware that we are not inquiring at large into the system, and our reference is strictly limited to the one-child

Chairman—continued.

homes?—All my evidence relates to the one-child homes. My object in coming here to-day is really to say what I feel very strongly, that if we are to have this recognised inspection of these one-child homes, I think a very great difficulty will be put in the way of helping these women when they once begin life and go out to service, because the difficulty of finding homes which will take in children when they are to be inspected will be enormously increased. It is not very difficult now, although of course it is difficult in a way, because it costs so much more now for the keep of the child. When I began work—and my experience is perhaps more liberal than that of Mrs. Wethered—I was never able to get a child, even in the very best days, taken for less than 4s. a week, and 5s. was the usual thing, and I am very much afraid that if this inspection is to take place we shall find that the women will not take the children even for that amount, because many of the homes I have sent children to are very clean and tidy, although they are very poor homes. They are quite good enough for the children of the foster-mother to be brought up in, but I am afraid that if these homes are inspected, certainly in the country, you will find that the Inspector will say: “These homes are not good enough; we must have a little more air, the cradle must be placed somewhere else, or there must be more ventilation”; and the result of that will be that the people will not take the children for the price they take them for now, and it will inevitably raise their charges. There is the very greatest dislike and distrust among the working classes in England of anything like inspection; they are very jealous of anybody going into their houses; they do not like anybody who is an official, they hate the tax collector, and they hate anybody who comes as a Government official and tries to go into their houses. I know from my own experience that many of these husbands will say to their wives: “You shall not take a child now; if I am to have an Inspector coming into the house you shall not take a child.” That will add enormously to the difficulty of finding homes for these children, and helping the mothers when we want to start them again in life. I should think probably that no woman under the altered circumstances would take a child for less than 6s., and probably 7s. would be the charge they would ask for. As it is so very desirable that the affection of the mother for the child, and the link of the mother with the child should be kept up, and as that is done so much through the foster-mother, I think that anything tending to raise the weekly expense of the keep of these children must have a very bad effect on the rescue work which people are interested in. It seems also to me a very great hardship that if these homes are good enough, and clean enough, and tidy enough for the children of the foster-parents to be brought up in and to live in, it should be said that these homes are not good enough for this nurse-child, who, after all, has no more claim to be well looked after and taken care of than the children of the foster-parents. I think that the difficulties we shall have in finding suitable homes will be very great, and then what is the girl to do? It is very difficult unless

3 March, 1908.]

Lady ST. HELIER.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

unless you work with them to realise what the position of the woman is when she comes out of the workhouse, or wherever she may be, where she has had no care shown to her, and when all her trouble comes upon her together. It is very difficult to realise the state of despair and the terrible state of loneliness that the woman is in. I have had hundreds of them come out of the workhouse without a penny in their pocket, and they go to a home, or very often if there is no home and they have nowhere to go to, they go to some wretched lodgings, where, of course, the position they are in and their future is a terrible thing to think of. Even if they come to a home, you see these girls get such very poor wages when they go out—many of them are not physically fit to earn much, and they cannot earn enough to pay for the support of their child and to keep themselves clothed and respectable. What I am so afraid of is that if these single homes are done away with we shall have these girls saying : “I cannot afford to pay this money ; I have no place to go to, I have nobody to turn to ; what am I to do ?” And the girl may either destroy herself or her child. I do not quite see what these girls are to do, because so few of them get any support from the father of their child ; the difficulty is ever to get anything from him ; they shield him or he goes away, so that unless there is an association which will help them to start for a little bit, or unless they are able to earn sufficient wages to keep their child properly and keep themselves properly and respectably, I do not quite see what they are to do.

735. Need you elaborate this ? We are men of the world and married and have families ?—I must put what I feel so strongly about, and I will not say more than is necessary.

736. I think you have put it extremely clearly and strongly ?—I do not know that I have anything more to say about it ; I have told you what my feeling and what my experience is, and I do not know that there is anything more I can say, except how very strongly I do feel what a misfortune it would be if these homes were done away with. There is another thing I should like to say before I conclude : you have not only to think of the mother and her future, but have we not to think a little bit of the children ? Is it a good or a desirable thing that the children should be driven into the workhouse and brought up like workhouse children, a charge on the rates, with all the sort of cut-and-dried ways in which they are educated, trained and brought up there ? Is it not better that they should be able to go and live with a kind woman who will look after them and care for them and give them some little idea of the tenderness of home and the love of a mother, which they would not have except for her ? I feel that very strongly, and I cannot help thinking that if these homes are done away with the work of rescue will be very seriously interfered with, and made very much more difficult than it is. As to the future of the children, I think it looks a very dark and a very sad one. Where I live in Berkshire, there is a little village where a certain number of children have been boarded out, and we have the greatest difficulty in getting them to take the children there, and in Twyford, where

Chairman—continued.

I used to live, we had the greatest difficulty to get them taken. I am quite sure that if these single-child homes are inspected not one man down in the little village where I live will allow his wife to take a single child. It may be that there are Inspectors and Inspectors, and I think ours is not a very agreeable person, but I am quite sure that if you have an Inspector who goes into the homes, not one husband there will allow his wife to take a child.

737. Then the Committee are to take it from you, I gather, clearly that with the experience of which you have told us, and for the reasons you have given us, and others you could give if necessary, you are decidedly opposed to extending the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to homes in which not more than one child is kept ?—Yes. I was thinking now of two or three cases that have come to my mind, where the advantage of the single-child homes has been so obvious. One is the case of a young man, now 22 years of age, who, 21 years ago, was taken by his mother to the little village I lived in, and his foster-mother has kept him all that time, although she has had no money since he was five years old, because the mother then deserted him and went away. She has kept him, although she had a family of 10 children herself, rather than let him go to the workhouse, and now he has grown up ; he is a very remarkable young man, and only a few months ago he got a Surrey County Council Scholarship, and he is now training to be a schoolmaster. That woman has struggled and worked, and nobody knows what she has gone through to keep that child, and she loved that child a great deal more than her own children. I could tell you of many other cases of a similar kind.

738. That is an illustrative case of which you could multiply examples ?—I can multiply it indefinitely.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

739. Your evidence is really that where homes are found by rescue societies and others official inspection is unnecessary ?—Yes.

740. But of course you would recognise that there is a vast number of homes which the rescue societies have nothing to do with ?—The rescue homes can always find some lady in the village who will visit these homes.

741. But there is a vast number of cases of illegitimate children which do not come under the rescue societies at all ?—Yes.

742. And, therefore, those children do not have the benefit of the inspection, which is given by the rescue societies ?—They have the inspection of the mother and the relations of the child ; unless the mother deserts the child, and they do desert their children occasionally, she will inspect it.

743. The mother may be at work ?—But she keeps up a correspondence with the woman who has the child.

744. Your evidence is that where rescue homes find the homes for the children, inspection is unnecessary ?—Yes, it would be quite unnecessary, I think, to inspect any homes where the Waifs and Strays are.

3 March, 1908.]

Lady ST. HELIER.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

745. All the Societies inspect their own homes, I understand; your home, for instance, inspected all the homes?—Yes, our matron did.

746. So that you did realise that inspection was necessary?—Yes, but there is inspection and inspection.

747. The difference seems to be as to what the class of inspection should be?—Yes.

748. Your objection rather is to the brass-buttoned Inspector?—Yes. We are willing that there should be inspection, but what I fear is that if you have this regular inspection, so many people will not regard it in the same way as we do, and they will say, "No," and close their homes.

749. You referred to the case of some village, where the Inspector was not altogether a tactful person?—Yes, but I must not give the name of the village.

750. But there would not be the same objection to an inspection by a tactful lady, something of the class of a health visitor?—I do not suppose there would be.

751. So that, mainly, the objection is to the class of inspection?—Yes, but not only that, because your inspection is not quite such a friendly thing, not the same kind of thing as a relation or a friend of the child, or woman going to see them.

752. Did the foster-mothers you had to deal with take the children, as a rule, to make profit?—No.

753. Simply from love of the children?—Yes.

754. So that, in each case they were selected homes, where the foster-parents did not want to make money, but wanted to take the children from the genuine love of them?—Yes. Many of them, of course, were people whose children were grown up.

755. That would be a totally different class of person from the class which advertises in the newspapers, wanting a child?—Yes.

Mr. Gulland.

756. Following up what Mr. Allen has just been asking, the only objection which you have is to the sort of official Inspector?—Yes.

757. Would you have any objection to a lady Inspector, who was going just as you, or some of your friends went, to visit these children?—I do not suppose it would be so disagreeable as a man going to inspect, but I think the country people would not like it, because, as I say, it would be associated with the Government as an official thing. Any inspections which we made were friendly inspections, but anything else, whether by the women or the men, would be regarded as official, and that is what they resent so much.

758. In some of these cases in the country, where there are no official Inspectors, are not the Poor Law Officers going out and inspecting the Poor Law children, who are boarded out?—

Mr. Gulland—continued.

I think the children who go from the workhouse are entirely different; the people take them from the workhouse, and they know they will be inspected from the workhouse, and they take them as Poor Law children; but the ones I am talking of do not come in that way.

759. But the people take them quite freely, even although they are Poor Law children, and even where there is inspection?—No, the Poor Law pays so badly for them; I forget what it is in our part of the country, but it is less a good deal than what we should pay if we boarded out a child.

760. Apparently, they can get people to take children at a lower rate; that seems to be contradicting your previous evidence?—In some places they take them, but they have a great difficulty, and in connection with the Newbury Workhouse, in the part of Berkshire where I live, one of the Guardians told me that they have the greatest difficulty in getting these children taken, because the women say they cannot take them for the price they pay. The price of food, clothes and everything has to come out of what they get, and it is very little that the workhouse people give them. Down there they have been breaking up the workhouse school, and trying to board the children out, and they have only been able to board out a few.

761. Supposing there was a case where, because of the little money paid, or anything of that kind, there was a case of cruelty by the foster-parent, do you not think the inspection of the official Inspector would be a little more thorough than the inspection of a non-paid official, and that the cruelty might be discovered more easily?—One has seen so many cases, some of them quite recent, where cruelty has been going on for years and years, and where no Inspector has found it out. I saw a case of that kind the other day reported, so that I think if there is cruelty it can be hid from the Inspector. I maintain that there is no cruelty; I think there are bad and unkind women in the world everywhere, but I maintain that if you take the majority of these foster-mothers they are not unkind, and that they love their foster-children just as much as they love their own.

762. Your whole point is that if this extension is made, there is going to be a sort of persecution?—No; I say if this is to be done, you will not have the children taken at all, and what is a woman to do?

Chairman.

763. There was one point I forgot to ask you about, and that is the age limit. Have you anything to say about that?—I think when the child comes to five years old it goes to school.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Miss E. H. DE K. CURTIS called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

764. You have been in the room while the two last witnesses have been in the chair?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

765. Generally do you concur in their evidence?—Yes.

766. You

3 March, 1908.]

Miss CURTIS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

766. You are the Superintendent of the District Nursing Association of Hammersmith and Fulham?—Yes, I am.

767. How long have you occupied that position?—17 years.

768. And it is in regard to your experience there that you come to offer your evidence?—Yes.

769. Do you speak on behalf of the Association, or do you speak individually?—I speak individually.

770. You are not authorised by that Association to speak here?—Not specially.

771. Will you proceed with your evidence, bearing in mind two things, the limited reference to this Committee, that we are not examining into the general question at all, and also what the two previous witnesses have said?—You have my *precis*, and if I may read my statement perhaps I shall be able to put it more clearly. I should also like to say that I am nursing under the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for nursing the sick poor in their own homes. I have been associated with that ever since its formation in 1890. It often falls to the lot of the district nurse to seek first a temporary home for three or six months for an infant whose mother is in hospital, or in a sanatorium; secondly, for a home for one who is left motherless and without available relations, but whose father is able and willing to pay; and, thirdly, for homes for fatherless infants, or for those whose fathers are incapacitated by illness from being the bread-winner, and whose mothers have to take to daily work or service. For these reasons it is our custom to keep a list of respectable women who will at short notice, and for what money is forthcoming, undertake the charge of an infant. This money at first often just covers the expense of food. The majority of these women take these children for sheer love and for neighbourly kindness, provided they can receive sufficient money for out-of-pocket expenses. In a large and very poor district in South London the superintendent of district nurses has taken pains to ascertain the views on this matter amongst her nurses and the foster-mothers they so largely use there, and she agrees entirely with me that we should lose a very large number of our most respectable, motherly and adaptable mothers and homes if such kindly aid as they are willing to give should bring them under any form of public inspection as baby farmers. Expense too would be a serious consideration. Very often, indeed, we have found valuable mothers willing to take a baby, legitimate or otherwise, for a small sum—that is to say, less than 5s. a week, which seems to be rather an accepted sum—for the first few weeks, until the mother could earn and afford to pay a little more. Not long ago one of the staff of this Association was nursing a patient whose husband was out of work. There was a very young infant and no one to care for it. We found a woman whose husband, after demurring for a short time, not only allowed his wife to take the baby for 2s. a week, but walked two miles to fetch the child himself after he came home from work. These people have helped us in the same way since, and are willing to go on

Chairman—continued.

doing so. They are not in actual want of money, and do not intend to make it by baby-farming, but they are glad to do a good turn for an unfortunate neighbour. To these people, and to many others I know and could quote, the thought of inspection and the registering of the infant would be an insurmountable objection. Neighbours will talk, and in our experience it is some of the most respectable and charitably-minded people amongst the working classes who are most put off by the fear of gossip. Neither the women nor the husbands, and more especially the latter, like the privacy of the home invaded by an official Inspector. It is said that inspection is so much in the air now that the women are accustomed to the idea, and proud to show off their babies, and this is true to a certain extent; but chiefly amongst those who take the infants for an occupation and additional means of livelihood. Of this I have one striking instance in my knowledge. Though some of these foster-mothers may be suitable, they are not amongst the most ideal; that is to say, they are not the comfortable, motherly, home-loving wives and mothers. In the case of illegitimate children, I think it cannot be too strongly urged that the class of mother last described, namely, what we call the motherly mothers, is by far the best to have charge of the child for the sake of the home influence on the child's future, and on the child's mother when she visits it. There is no denying the fact that in my own experience amongst the poor during the last 20 years in London, I have found that an appalling amount of neglect exists, accounting for the high rate of infant mortality. This is due to ignorance, and it is still more due to slackness, laziness and drink, and to the total absence of the sense of responsibility on the part of the mothers, who pay no regard to the simplest laws that govern health and life. They have formed bad habits, and will not take the trouble to break these habits, hence the children suffer from malnutrition, dirt, and insanitary, vitiated atmosphere, and if such a mother has charge of a nurse-child it necessarily suffers too. If, as is too often the case with illegitimate children, that child is born with a weak, tainted constitution, it succumbs. I have never in all my experience met a case of a child exposed to cruelty or neglect because it was illegitimate. On the contrary, several cases stand out in my recollection of much care being lavished on these very children, one of whom had such an impaired constitution that he nearly died, and suffered in a remarkable and prolonged degree from the effects of burns which in an ordinary child would have healed in a tenth of the time. Had it not been for special circumstances, he would have lost his life because of his antecedents truly, but not from want of care on the part of his foster-mother—quite the contrary. I believe that one result of the enforced inspection of one-child homes on weekly payment would be to add to the number of baby-farmers. The woman who likes to make a living would say, "If I am to be inspected, I may as well have two or three." It is impossible for me to agree with the Boards of Guardians who say that babies flourish best who are tended together rather than singly.

3 March, 1908.]

Miss CURTIS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

It may save trouble and be more satisfactory to the Inspector, but in the nature of things each separate infant requires individual motherly care, such as is not given to the same extent when shared by several. Such an enforced inspection as that proposed to a certain extent infringes on the rights, privileges and privacy of home life, which, in spite of the bad conditions of many of the homes, one wishes to maintain, while seeking, on the other hand, to improve and raise the conditions of these homes. This will not be achieved by repressive measures, and the law would rather tend towards increased State provision for the children, especially for the illegitimate (I have an illustration of that in my mind), whose mothers would thus be deprived of one of their chief safeguards, namely, the care and responsibility of providing for their children. The clause, if it became law, would probably not redress the evil it aims at, because the ill-intentioned, evil-disposed people would find plenty of loop-holes for escaping it, while it would create fresh evils and difficulties. A case I heard quoted here in support of the need for inspection of single-nurse children, and one of most horrible cruelty and neglect, was that of an illegitimate niece of the foster-mother, who, while caring for her own children, neglected this one. This case not only would not be touched by this clause, which exempts relations, but it gives one pause to consider that the children would thus be thrown more on the mercy of relations, who, if vicious, have more reason for wishing to compass their death than the average kindly foster-mother, even if rather ignorant. Moreover, what is to hinder an evil-minded woman from posing as a relation?

772. Is that all you wish to say?—That is my statement, but I am quite prepared to give any illustrations on any of these points.

773. In the cases where you said in your evidence, "I have an illustration in mind," you can give us, if necessary, illustrative cases?—Yes.

774. This evidence is based mainly upon your experience in Hammersmith and Fulham?—Yes; also, years ago, in St. Giles, Soho, Holborn and King's Cross. I worked for a short time in Windsor, and for a longer time in Chelsea.

775. I gather that it is personal evidence, and that it is not given on behalf of your Association?—It is personal. Of course, now my nurses report cases to me; I do not go quite so much into the homes of the poor now, but I have daily reports from the nurses.

776. Has this matter as to the extension of the Act been up before your Association and discussed?—Very freely indeed.

777. Has it been considered at a meeting of your Association?—No.

778. It has not been formally considered and any minute put upon their books?—Nothing of the kind.

779. You say it has been freely discussed, but not in such a way as that you can represent to us what is the feeling of your Association on the subject?—That is so. I would like to say that one of the worst cases of cruelty and neglect which we have discovered was reported to me about a year ago. It was the case of two or three infants,

Chairman—continued.

and I instantly said to the nurse, "If that woman is taking more than one child she must be registered, and you will please find out about it." The nurse did find out about it, and said she was registered. It was an appalling case; I instantly wrote to headquarters about it, and the case was investigated. I do not know how long it had been going on, but it was quite one of the worst cases I ever came across.

780. You have not said anything about the age-limit. Have you anything to say about that?—No, I have no views on the subject, because at five years of age they go to school, and I am a very strong advocate for their going to school as early as possible. I thought that the proposed alteration in the law would tend towards State provision for the children. I have a case in my mind which is a very typical one—and I think we have had hundreds similar—of these thrifless, untidy but well-intentioned mothers; they do not intend to be unkind to their children, and their children are brought up somehow, although not ideally. There is one special home of that kind which we knew very intimately indeed, and when that woman's children got a little bigger she took in a child to nurse—I think it was an illegitimate child of a friend of hers—for a small payment. She could bring up her children and feed them, as she considered, sufficiently on 3s. a week. I am not sure what payment she got for the child she took in, but it was probably about that amount. If an Inspector had gone into that woman's house and seen that child, she would have said, "This child is not having enough milk," and she would very likely have found it gnawing a piece of fried fish, which, along with bread and jam, is the ordinary food children in that kind of home are brought up on. The Inspector would have been bound to say, "This is not fit food for this child, and it must have different food." The mother would then say, "I cannot afford it."

781. This is not something that actually occurred?—Yes, it actually occurred—not the Inspector calling, because she was not subject to inspection, having only one child to nurse.

782. Are you telling us what the Inspector or the mother did say?—Not what the Inspector said.

783. But what you think they would say?—Yes, because the Inspector was not there; it was the case of a single child.

784. This all refers to what would occur if this alteration in the law was made?—Yes. Necessarily the Inspector would be bound to say, "That child is not being properly fed."

785. In your opinion?—Yes, I think any good Inspector would say so. Therefore that child would probably be removed to the workhouse, and it would be in a better condition than all the other members of that family.

786. This is all hypothesis?—Hardly, because this woman did have this nurse-child.

787. You say that it is probable from your experience?—Yes.

Mr. Gulland.

788. Take that case you have just talked about, do you not think the result of the visit of the Inspector

3 March, 1908.]

Miss CURTIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

Inspector would be that perhaps the foster-mother would give the child milk instead of fish?—I doubt it, knowing that particular woman, and knowing that she is a type of a great many others. She might tell the Inspector she would, but she would probably tell him that the child did not like milk; because that is what they always tell me.

789. You would allow the child to suffer for the want of inspection?—No, I think there is a very serious want, and in connection with a certain type of homes, if it were possible to inspect them all we might be glad to do so; but it is not possible, and that is not the way to make women into better mothers. I have a great faith in health visiting, and I think there will come more and more of that, and I think if the health visitors go into the houses in rather an informal and unofficial way they will be able eventually to help the mothers. I think it will not be done very quickly, but I think gradually there will come an improvement. There is room for enormous improvement in the conditions of the homes.

790. Do you not think it is possible that the health visitor might also be the Inspector under this Act for the one-child homes?—That I cannot tell.

791. Do you see anything inconsistent in having the same person inspecting the single-child homes and also being the health visitor and giving advice about feeding, and so on?—No, and I think if this clause became law it would be, perhaps, a good way of dealing with it, but personally I should regret to see this, because it puts a certain premium on the child that is paid for rather than on the ordinary child in the ordinary home.

792. You mean that it gives the child an undue advantage, because it gets the benefit of the advice of the Inspector?—Yes, and therefore it tends towards the State taking care of children and therefore loosening the sense of parental responsibility.

793. But so far as the particular child is concerned, you think it would do good?—If we are to argue from the individual to the general; of course on both sides one could bring forward individual cases, but you must take a thing of this kind generally.

794. Have you come across many cases of cruelty and neglect in these one-child homes?—Not one, and since this matter really came more prominently forward we have made a great many inquiries. We found, on the contrary, a remarkable number of cases of exactly the opposite kind, and I could tire you with telling you a great number of cases.

Mr. Allen—continued.

795. What sort of number of children do you deal with? How many do you board out?—It is very difficult to say, because we not only nurse children, but our work is for men, women and children, and it brings us into touch with over a thousand families each year.

796. In any case the families you are describing are families that have been selected because of motherly women being at the head of them

Mr. Allen—continued.

or something of that kind?—I could hardly tell you that; we have selected our nurses we send the children to, but many of those I have come across are women I have met who have been selected by their own friends. I was talking to a woman the other day who had a child she was devoted to, the child being now eight or nine years of age and going to school, and the woman was very touchy indeed when I began to ask her a few questions, as she did not know my reasons. I very soon ascertained that if she had had to have an official inspection for that child she would not have had it at all.

797. But you do inspect the homes where you send the children to foster-mothers?—No.

798. You visit them?—We know them, and we do not keep on looking them up, as that is not our business.

799. You either visit them or know them well beforehand?—Yes; but we might or might not; we should advise our patient and say: "We think this woman would care for your child," and the child would be taken care of for the time.

800. Why should a tactful lady Inspector calling make the neighbours gossip more than you going into the homes?—Perhaps a tactful one would not, but on the other hand there is a feeling of dislike which they have to the privacy of their homes being invaded.

801. That would surely apply to anyone, for example, your society of nurses, just as much as to a lady Health Inspector?—They would very soon get over it, and it is very rarely that they object to the district nurses. The district nurse, however, goes in in a different way, to help them as a friend when they are in trouble. She does not go in to spy out and see if they are doing the thing right or wrong.

802. Do we not get to the bottom fact that it all depends upon what the inspection is—as I said to one of the other witnesses, whether it is a brass-buttoned inspection or a tactful inspection?—That, I think, applies to everything and not more to inspection than to anything else; the same thing applies to the district nurses, but I think it is the principle of inspection that they would object to. I took the trouble to ask several women, putting it to them very tentatively indeed, something like this, "Now, you would not mind if anybody came to inspect," and they said, "Yes, we would, we should not take the child, under these conditions." We discovered a child to be a nurse-child who we had long thought to be one of the family. It was an ideal home which one would have chosen at once and the woman there said, "We should not have liked it at all if we had had to have inspection; I should not have had her." I said, "Why do you object?" and she said, "We should not want anybody coming in in that kind of way, we should feel we were not trusted, and my husband would not have thought it worth while." Many of the very best people would not feel that it was worth while. They do not want to make money. I think there is an inferior set who would pass muster, and I know one of them. It is not a home that I should have chosen to send a nurse-child to, but I know a child she has had for five or six years. I have constantly seen

3 March, 1908.]

Miss CURTIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Allen—continued.

the child because my business in other respects has taken me to that house, and I think any Inspector would pass that home. I thought it over when this question came up and personally I should not pass that home because I do not think the mother has a good moral influence on the child or on the child's mother when she visits her, but there would be nothing in that home which an Inspector would object to. I asked that woman if she would mind an Inspector coming, and she said, "No; I have nothing to hide and I should not mind." I think she is a nurse-

Mr. Allen—continued.

mother who would very likely, if subjected to inspection, take two or three children.

803. If you saw an advertisement in a paper from a woman wanting to take a child, do you think that would be a home that should be inspected?—I should hardly know what to say, but I have no experience of that.

804. You have not come across such cases?—No. My only answer is that I have not come across the evils that are the outcome of these advertisements.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Thursday, 5th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.

| Mr. Ellis.

Mr. Gulland.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. GEORGE CRAIGHILL called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

805. You are, I believe, a Member of the Parliamentary Committee of the Poor Law Unions Association of England and Wales ?—Yes.

806. And you have been its Chairman since 1906, I think ?—Yes.

807. Are you also a Magistrate for the County of Durham, and are you Clerk to the Guardians of Gateshead Union ?—Yes.

808. I see at Questions 285 and onwards, Mr. Brown gave us an account of your Association and its procedure, so that we need not go over that ground again ?—Quite so.

809. Will you give us an account of the proceedings of your Association, and particularly of your Parliamentary Committee, with respect to this matter of the inclusion of one-child homes ?—The Parliamentary Committee have had this matter under consideration year after year since 1901, and they have had introduced into Parliament Bills proposing an Amendment of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, in the direction of one-child homes being included, and also for raising the age limit from five to seven years. That is so far as Parliament itself is concerned. I might say, before going further, that the Parliamentary Committee report to the Council very fully their proceedings in relation to any Bill, and that has to be approved by the Council before it goes on to the Association.

810. I think you need not dwell upon that, because you have told us that this Bill is introduced on behalf of your Council ?—Yes.

811. That is the approval ?—Yes, and we have also communicated with the Home Office, the Local Government Board, and the Public Control Committee of the London County Council. We have had interviews at the Home Office with Mr. Herbert Samuel, the Under-Secretary.

812. What date was that ?—The last interview with Mr. Samuel was in August, 1907, and the gist of what we said to Mr. Samuel on that occasion was that with regard to one-child cases, the Association still maintained its attitude, that they should be included, and that all these cases should be notified to the local authority ; but that they thought with a view of meeting

Chairman—continued.

the opposition, it might be arranged that local authorities should have power to grant exemptions from inspection in suitable cases.

813. Exemption from inspection, but not exemptions from notification ?—Quite so. That was put before the Association at its Annual Meeting, on the 21st November last, and on the Motion of Miss Brodie Hall, who is not a member of the Council, but is a member of the Association, a Resolution in the following terms was adopted :—“That in the opinion of this Association, representing 356 Unions, representing a population of 24 millions of people, no amendment of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, will be satisfactory which does not make obligatory the notification and inspection of all one-child cases, and this Association petitions the Home Secretary in his promised Child Bill to extend to all such cases the protection already afforded to two or more children placed out for hire or reward ; the Association, while willing that the local authority should have power to grant exemption from inspection to certain cases, deprecates any exemption whatever from notification, or any exemption of a district as a whole, as opposed to special cases.” There were at that Meeting 401 representatives of local authorities, and there was only one representative who voted against that Resolution when it was put. I hand in a list of the Unions then belonging to the Association, giving the name of each Union. (*Handing in the same.*) I might go on to say that in January last the Association sent a circular to all the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales, whether members of the Association or not. That circular set out the Association’s proposals, and it also set out the opposition to them, and it asked for answers to certain questions. The replies to date are as follows :—The first question was : Is your Board in favour of the proposed extension of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to one-child cases, notification being compulsorily, but the local authority having power to grant exemption from inspection in suitable cases ? We have had 229 replies up to this morning.

814. Out

5 March, 1908.]

Mr. CRAIGHILL.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

814. Out of how many circulars sent out?—Out of about 630 circulars sent out. Of course, it takes more than a month to get answers from all the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales, because they have to be submitted to Meetings and various formalities. Two or three months is the usual time to get replies from all of them. I think the Local Government Board people will probably have a similar experience; at any rate, that is the experience of the Association. The figures are as follows: Yes, 190; No, 15; No opinion expressed, 24. That makes the 229. Then the second Question that was asked was: In how many cases during 1907 did it come to the knowledge of your Board's officers that there had been offences against children in one-child cases? The answer is, 57.

815. Do you mean that the number of answers is 57?—No—the number of cases is 57. We got answers from 229 Unions, but the number of cases is 57, with this Note, “In many Unions no record has been kept, as the officers have not had power to deal with one-child cases”; so that that is not what you would call a complete or accurate record. Then the third Question was: In how many cases during 1907 were children made chargeable to your Board from one-child homes by (a) foster-parents who could no longer afford to keep a child? The answer is “94”; and (b) by persons other than foster-parents, through neglect or desertion of a child? The answer is “48”; and (c) by other causes? The answer is “30.” Again, several clerks have replied that no record has been kept, though such cases are known to have occurred. I might also say before leaving these figures, that at the same time as this circular was sent out on behalf of the Poor Law Unions Association, another circular was sent by the opponents of the views of the Association to Boards of Guardians.

816. Is that within your knowledge?—Yes, because the Gateshead Guardians received one; I have it here. That circular was sent out by the opponents to Boards of Guardians, enclosing a paper of points to be considered by them in the form of questions.

817. Before you pass from these figures, I may put this to you. At present, as I gather, replies are coming in daily?—Yes.

818. And, as you have indicated, they may go on coming in for some weeks?—Yes.

819. Therefore, these figures are to a certain extent incomplete?—That is so.

820. We must not take them as finally closing the case?—No; and if you would allow us, we could put in a return at a subsequent date.

821. We will consider it. Now, will you go on to your next point?—The next point is that in our view at the present time, there is nothing to prevent a person who has been convicted of cruelty to children from taking infants one at a time, without having to notify the fact to the local authority.

822. That you state as your impression and belief as a Clerk to Guardians?—On behalf of the Association, I would like to call attention to a case I have here. The Secretary of the Association received a letter from the Clerk to the Edmonton Union, dated the 27th February,

Chairman—continued.

and that letter reads as follows: “Infant Life Protection Act, 1897. Since sending you the report of the work done in this Union under the above Act, a most serious one-child case has come to my notice, namely, that of Mrs. Byers, who, having now finished her term of imprisonment for the burning of bodies of children in her care, has returned to this district, and has already taken one nurse-child. We have no power under the Act to inspect this woman's premises, of which she is well aware, thus making the loophole in the Act the means of escape for a notorious baby-farmer of the worst type.” The Secretary of the Association has got this morning a detailed statement from the Edmonton Union, with respect to this woman, which I would like to read with your permission. It is not very long; I do not want to weary you with details.

823. This is another illustration of how the Act is evaded?—Yes.

824. I think we do not need any further illustrations. It is a fact within our knowledge; in fact that is why we are here?—We have no desire to weary you.

825. This letter is signed “F. Shelton”; he is Clerk to the Edmonton Union?—Yes.

826. And who is the gentleman “H. Davey, Esq.” to whom it is addressed?—Mr. Davey is the Secretary of the Poor Law Unions' Association. The view of the Unions' Association shortly is that the protection of children brought into the world through no fault of theirs, is really the primary matter to be considered.

827. Of course that follows. That is the basis of your action?—Yes.

828. Have you anything more to say with respect to your Association?—Not in respect of the Association, I think.

829. Then I gather that we have, with such authority as you possess, which is considerable from your official position, your evidence in support of the extension of the Act of 1897 to the one-child case?—Yes.

830. Have you anything to say with regard to the age; perhaps you have already covered that in what you have said?—I think it would be desirable to raise the age from five to seven years. I have a baby in my family at the present time of five-and-a-half, and I have been studying him lately in connection with this five and seven years. I think if he had to come under the Act, I would rather he went on until he was seven, because there is a big difference after all between a child of five and a child of seven. A child of five has not lost all the elements of a baby.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

831. Has your Association considered at all what the extra cost of administering the Act would be, if it was applied to one-child homes?—We do not anticipate that there would be any material increase in the cost.

832. You do not think that bringing in the one-child homes would make the number of inspections very much greater than it is at the present moment?—I think it would make the number of inspections much greater.

833. Would not that necessitate fresh Inspectors?—It would, undoubtedly.

834. Would

5 March, 1908.]

Mr. CRAIGHILL.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

834. Would not that increase the cost?—Yes, but I do not think it would amount to a material thing in the whole, and certainly not much in the different Unions.

835. Is it your experience that at the present time most of the Unions have Inspectors for this purpose?—No, I think it is the other way. I think most of the Unions do not have the Inspectors.

836. Have you any official figures as to what number of Unions at the present time have Inspectors?—No, we have endeavoured to get them, but we have not been able to do so.

837. And so far as you can say, the experience which your Association has acquired is, that inspection is not objected to by respectable foster-parents?—I do not think it is.

Mr. Gulland.

838. Does your Association include Scotland?—No, England and Wales.

839. Does it include London?—Yes, it includes London.

840. Do you find objection from the London Authorities?—We have endeavoured to get the London County Council to agree to our view, and also to meet us and go into it; but we have not been successful in either case.

841. You said that there were 15 answers against the inclusion. Did they give reasons at all?—I cannot say that, but I could find out, and if there are reasons put them in.

842. I just wanted to know what the reasons were if they did state them. With your questions did you send a statement explaining the matter, and giving a lead; or did you only ask the questions?—We sent a circular, putting both sides of the question, putting what had taken place on our side, and also what had taken place by the opponents and their views. If I might be allowed, I will put the circular in (*handing in the same*).

Chairman.

843. This is what you referred to in your evidence in chief?—Yes.

Mr. Gulland.

844. In your questions you asked whether the local authority was to be allowed to make exceptions. I see you underlined that in your circular. Why did you do that?—There are various points underlined, I think.

845. Has it been part of your discussion all along, that the local authorities should be allowed to make exceptions?—No; that proposal was first made, as I stated in answer to the Chairman, to Mr. Herbert Samuel by me at the Home Office in August last. It was subsequently passed, not unanimously, but 400 out of 401 representatives at the Annual Meeting voted in favour of it; but it is only since 1907 that we have taken that view, and that view has been taken with the object of meeting the reasonable points of the Opposition.

846. Was there any discussion as to the details of what would be considered suitable cases?—No, I do not think there has been any discussion on that point. It would be largely a matter for discretion and common-sense.

Mr. Gulland—continued.

847. And you have not framed any form of words that you think might be included in a Bill giving this option to local authorities to exempt suitable cases?—No, we have not.

848. No definition of what a suitable case would be?—I think that might be safely left to regulations to be made by the central authority under the Act, and assuming that the Act was passed—assuming that the power was given to the Local Government Board and various other Government Departments, to make regulations carrying out the view of the Act. It would never do to have one local authority defining suitable cases in one way, and another local authority defining suitable cases in another way. It would be much better to have a definition either by Parliament, or, as we think preferably, by a central authority.

849. Then you mean that Parliament in the Act, or by regulations of the Local Government Board, should state what suitable cases would be, and would you then leave it optional to the local authorities to take advantage of these exemptions; is that your point?—No; as I understand the question, I do not think that quite accurately represents the view of the Association, if I might put it that way. I think their view is that there should be exemption in suitable cases, and that the definition or general view for the guidance of local authorities as to suitable cases, so as to have a uniform administration, might be done by regulations to be subsequently issued by the Home Office, I would take it, as they are the authority under this Act.

850. I see that the parts that you underline in this circular are really those parts dealing with this proposed exemption; did you feel that that was necessary in order to get a favourable answer from your Unions?—No.

851. Or because it was importing new matter. You draw special attention to that point?—Yes, we do draw attention to that point, and to other things as well.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

852. You stated that 57 offences have been reported by the 229 Unions as occurring in one-child homes. Can you tell us at all how many of those 57 offences were in homes which would have come within the suggested extension of the Act? Were they all such cases, or were some of them cases which would not have been covered by the suggested extension of the Act?—I could not say. It has not been analysed in that way; but we could have it analysed and put in.

853. Therefore, in one-child homes, there might be cases where the children were with relatives, and people of that kind?—Yes, I follow your point.

854. It has not been analysed in that way?—No, it has not, but it can be, and the analysis put in, if you wish. I see the force of the point.

Mr. Gulland.

855. Were those offences in the way of cruelty?—Yes, I think some of them were.

856. They were not mere cases of non-registration?—No, I think not.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

857. You

5 March, 1908.]

Miss FITZGERALD-KENNEY.

[Continued.]

Miss A. FITZGERALD-KENNEY called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

857. You are an Inspector, I think, of boarded-out pauper children under the Local Government Board of Ireland ?—I am.

858. Will you give us an idea over what area your duties extend ?—They extend in a straight line over the whole southern half of Ireland, the boundary line being one from Dublin to Galway.

859. That is the area respecting which you wish to speak ?—That is the area of which I can speak with knowledge.

860. You have been, I think, over five years an Inspector ?—Yes.

861. Perhaps you will lay before us the evidence that you wish to give ?—The number of boarded-out Poor Law children under my supervision last year was 1,196. I have made a close and careful study of the working of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1897. That study I made chiefly for the purpose of obtaining information which might from time to time be required by the Local Government Board. The Local Government Board of Ireland has no power vested in it with regard to this Act. The great defect in the Act of 1897 is, in my opinion, that it does not apply to one-child cases except where an infant has been adopted for a less sum than £20, and that even in that case, inspection ceases upon the completion of the second year of age. That defect makes itself particularly felt in Ireland, because of the intense repugnance to children of unmarried parents. In consequence of that repugnance, it is found exceedingly difficult to get any foster-parents, except those who are very poor and ignorant, to admit such a child into their homes. The nurse-child is thus practically forced into surroundings which create the most urgent need for inspection with reference to proper feeding, cleanliness and other health requirements ; and yet, under the Act, the child is denied the advantage of inspection. No doubt occasionally foster-mothers of a better type can be got to take charge of such a child. These will usually be mothers who have lost their own children, or respectable women having no family ties. But my experience is that in Ireland, especially in the more remote rural districts, these cases are so rare, that they may be safely left out of account.

862. Your evidence is rather by way of a statement. I suppose it is based upon your experience ?—It is.

863. Can you give us any cases illustrative of what you are saying ?—Certainly. With regard to taking children of unmarried parents, there is an extremely strong feeling. I have known of one case where a woman accepted such a child but it was made impossible for her to keep it in the district, so strongly did the neighbours object. The objection would be strongest in the country districts, where everything is known ; in a town district it would not be so easily found out, because they can much more easily disguise that the child is there ; they might pass it off as the child of a relation, or the child of a daughter who was away ; but in country districts they know everything about each other, and they cannot so easily hide it. To illustrate that, I have in my mind two cases in particular. In one case the mother left her infant in the house

Chairman—continued.

of a neighbour not very far from a big city, and that woman was not a married woman ; she had no family ties of her own. She took the child, and it came later on the rates, because the mother ceased to pay for it, and she applied to the workhouse for a boarding-out Order. I investigated the case to see whether it was a proper place in which to leave the child, and I found that it was. The other case was the case of a married woman who had children of her own and accepted such a child ; she was a very deformed and miserable child altogether. The mother paid for some time for her from America, but finally the mother ceased to pay, and that child again was put upon the rates and sent into the Workhouse. It is sometimes pleaded that if inspection were extended to one-child cases the better class of foster-parents who might otherwise take charge of a child would object to take that charge subject to the obligation of satisfying an Inspector. But as an Inspector of boarded-out pauper children I can state most confidently that there has been a great improvement since the appointment of Women Inspectors in the class of foster-parents who apply for nurse-children. I have generally found that only those foster-parents who have something to conceal object to inspection, and that they do so in order that they may be able to keep that something concealed.

864. When you say that there has been a great improvement since the appointment of Women Inspectors, does the matter rather turn in your opinion upon the nature and character of the inspection, and especially upon the class of people who are Inspectors ?—I think that has a great deal to do with it. One can very easily offend the poor, and they are more suspicious than people who are better off, so that much depends upon the person of the Inspector.

865. You place considerable emphasis on Women Inspectors ?—I think we can get a better class of women ; we can get a trained hospital nurse who knows what she is about for a salary that a doctor would not take ; and she will not have that rough-and-ready style about her which offends the poor so much.

866. Do the women wear any particular kind of dress, any uniform like a nurse ?—I do not think that matters in the least, because everybody knows everything in Ireland, and if you are seen once you are very well known the next time you appear, and the dress will not matter in the slightest. I think the uniform of a nurse perhaps brings confidence with it ; they trust more to what she will say, perhaps, when they know that she has a right to wear it ; but it is not an essential.

867. And you make the statement without any hesitation that it would be generally found that only those foster-parents who have something to conceal object to inspection, and that they do so in order that they may be able to keep that something concealed ?—I make it with this qualification, perhaps, that when we were first appointed people were rather afraid of us ; they do not like things that are new, that they have not tried before, and perhaps they did object in the beginning ;

5 March, 1908.]

Miss FITZGERALD-KENNEY.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

beginning ; but that has certainly disappeared, because I not only have to inspect the children that I go to inspect, but I have to give an opinion upon the children of the household ; I have to read the letters that come home from America, and I have to do a great many other things which make a great unnecessary demand upon my time from my own point of view, but which I cannot leave undone, you see. In order to maintain the tie between us they must be done, although, of course, properly speaking the performance of them rather increases the expense ; it means that car hire must run into a little more while the car is waiting for work which I have not to do, but work which must be done if I am efficiently to carry out my own work.

868. Will you pass to your next point ?—My next point is that unmarried mothers in my country, especially those of the more respectable class, generally leave the country and go to America ; and if they do perhaps remain in the local districts they never stay there as a rule, they go up to Dublin or to some City where they are not known, and there their children are born. Then they board them out in the Unions perhaps in which the children may be born, and with reference to them the people in those Unions know nothing. They place them with anyone who will take a child, and those foster-parents are sometimes old and feeble women, they are not able to lift up the baby ; they are not able to keep the baby clean. They think perhaps that, because of their age, a great deal of importance is to be attached to their own opinions ; but they let the children get cold, and will not remember that heat is necessary. They will feed them out of medicine bottles with tubes stuck into them. They are a very difficult class to deal with, and it is only by coaxing them that one can in any way influence them. You understand that we do not want to make it more difficult for the mother to find a home. We want just to look after the child in a home.

869. I suppose behind all that, which as I say is a statement, you could give us a large number of illustrative cases ?—I could give you such cases, but you understand that the administration of the Infant Life Protection Act is not vested in the Local Government Board of Ireland.

870. I am quite aware of that ?—Another point which I would like to make, is that very often there is a prejudice against these children, and people with whom I come in contact say to me : " But sure they would be much better off if they did die ; what is there before them in this world ? " That is their ignorance, of course ; but having that ignorance to cope with, it is serious for the child, perhaps, if it comes to a critical illness, when it is necessary to sit up all night and look after it properly, if you are to drag it through. Then there is the further point, that the children even when placed in homes where there are other children are more delicate. These children are, as a class, very delicate—I think that is pretty well admitted—they are often tubercular, rickety and marasmic, and it is very difficult to pull them round at all, often. In my own experience they have sent for me at 11, 12 and 1 o'clock at night for me to come and see the baby, if they find it is in a bad way. Foster-mothers often do not

Chairman—continued.

attach much importance to doctors' medicines ; they will bring the doctor's medicine to an Inspector and say, " Do you think it will do the child any harm ? What is your opinion of it ? " Of course the Inspector would insist on the doctor's instructions being carried out. It has also to be borne in mind that it sometimes happens that the person who places the child at nurse is not its mother. There is a danger that this may lead to an infamous traffic in children.

871. Do you know that it has done so at all ?—I have had one case that came under my notice, where the nurse who had attended the mother adopted the child for a sum of £20—a little over £20—it must have been £25 perhaps ; but I know that it came under inspection, and when it became more delicate, she boarded it out with another woman, and paid so much a week for it ; so that it had to be inspected. It was transferred to another woman, and we lost sight of it. We heard afterwards that it had died.

872. Do you know of any other similar cases ?—No, that is the only one that has come under my own personal notice—that I had notice of myself. I may observe that these considerations refer to one-child cases placed not with near relatives, but with strangers. Very often I find that these children are taken by the grandmothers, and then they are properly minded so far as the women know how. I would urge that it should be made incumbent upon the individuals or Associations placing a child at nurse, no less than upon the nurse herself, to notify the local authority of the home in which the child has been received, and that the same regulation should apply to all transfers of the child to new homes. My point in that is that it is very difficult for us to trace these children if an institution or an individual or an association places a child at nurse, unless we go round the streets and knock at each of the doors and try to find it. If the nurse herself does not voluntarily register it, it is most difficult for us to find the child, especially when there is a thick population. If the institution or the individual were made to notify as well as the nurse, it would be comparatively easy. A local authority might perhaps have power to exempt one-child cases from inspection ; but a return of all such exemptions with the reasons therefor should be submitted to the Local Government Board for Ireland quarterly, the continuance of the exemption to be contingent upon ratification by that Board.

873. Would you in any way specify the causes or reasons for the exemption ?—No ; I decidedly would not. I do not think it is well to tie up the hands of local authorities.

874. You would give them discretion ?—I would.

875. You would suggest that in reporting a case to the Local Government Board for Ireland, or the superior authority, whatever it was—I suppose it would be the Local Government Board in Ireland—it should be incumbent upon those persons to state exactly why they did it and give their reasons ?—I think so. I think they ought to explain why they do it, but I would not limit them to any set of specific reasons.

876. You would not give the Local Government Board as the superior authority a veto ?—Yes, I

would

5 March, 1908.]

Miss FITZGERALD-KENNEY.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

would vest in the Local Government Board the authority of veto. I would make all exemptions contingent upon the Local Government Board's sanction; but within those limits I would give the local authority the fullest liberty; because a case may need inspection in one set of circumstances and not in another.

877. Is that all you have to say with respect to the extension of the Act to one-child homes?—Yes, those are all the points that occur to me.

878. With regard to the age-limit, have you anything to say?—I think the age-limit ought to be extended up to seven years; because a child of five is a mere baby, and is not able to tell anything about itself.

879. Then we are to gather that you are clearly in favour of extending the operation of the Act of 1897 to one-child cases?—Most distinctly.

Mr. Gulland.

880. Is there any statement anywhere of the view of the Unions in Ireland on this point?—The Act has not been very rigidly enforced in the Unions in Ireland; it has been in force in my own district. Twenty-six Unions at the end of last year (and the end of our year is the 31st of March) have enforced it rigidly; but the question is not a very big one in Ireland. We do not have a tremendous number of these children born, in the first place.

881. How many Unions are there in your district?—86.

882. And only 26 of them have enforced the Act at all?—I do not think, speaking from my knowledge, that there were any cases in the other Unions to which it would apply. They may occur from time to time, but the local authority is the Board of Guardians, and the Board of Guardians is disposed to say, "What can we do? We can only inspect in cases where there are two children received. We have not got any such cases in our district; we have one-child cases only." Then when a case arises in which two children are received, it is apt to be overlooked.

883. Are there any cases in these 26 Unions where there are special Inspectors?—Yes, there are three Women Inspectors. We have one in the Rathdown Union and one in Dublin and one in Cork. I am speaking only for my own district in Ireland.

884. Those are special Inspectors under the Infant Life Protection Act?—Yes.

885. Is your own duty to inspect the two-child homes, or as part of your duty, do you also inspect boarded-out children?—My entire duty is to inspect boarded-out children.

886. For the Unions?—For the Local Government Board.

887. But not under the Infant Life Protection Act?—No; but as a matter of fact, I have inspected probably all the homes where two children are received.

888. In the course of your duties, or in what way?—For obtaining information that the Local Government Board may from time to time require for Parliamentary or other purposes.

889. Then you are the Inspector of the Local Government Board?—I am one of the Inspectors.

890. How many districts are there in Ireland for that purpose?—There are two Women Inspectors.

Mr. Gulland—continued.

891. You have one district, and there is another?—Yes.

892. Is boarding-out common among the Unions of their children?—It is very common indeed. We are very anxious to increase it, too.

893. Do you find any difficulty in getting good homes for the children?—I find great difficulty in getting good homes for this class of child, because they do not like them. It sometimes of course comes down to pounds, shillings and pence; but they are not accepted in the way that orphans are accepted.

894. Does that apply both to Catholic and Protestant homes?—We have very few Protestant children. I think there are only about six boarded-out Protestant children in the Unions. I cannot tell you the number definitely, but it is something very small; it may be 10. It is very difficult to get Protestant foster-parents; they are much more well-to-do, and they do not like to take Union children. I have gone to them and asked them to take these Protestant children, and the women have agreed; and then the husband comes home and says: "I will not have one at any price," and it is left again in the workhouse. But there are very few Protestant children. It is our strict rule, you know, to board out the children with parents of the religion of which the child is registered; we do not allow anything else.

895. What is the usual payment for boarded-out children?—We pay 2s. 6d. a week up to 5s. The average might be 2s. 6d. or 3s.

896. Do you find any difficulty there about inspection; do the foster-parents object to inspection?—I think in the beginning they did. I think they objected very much at first; I think they were rather afraid of us, and the sort of idea was, "People are suspecting us when they are sending these Inspectors."

897. But when they get used to inspection, they do not object to it?—On the contrary, they are rather a nuisance; they will insist on your stopping.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

898. You said that the Protestant husbands object to these boarded-out children being taken in; is that because they object to the Inspector coming to the house?—No, I take it that it is not; because they will take Protestant children from Protestant Orphan Institutions. The particular case I have in my mind, is one where we have two such children; but a third is a child from the workhouse that was a child of unmarried parents.

899. And the Institution that you refer to would, in fact, be inspecting?—The Protestant Orphan Society would inspect by their own officials.

900. Therefore, it could not be an objection to inspection, because the children would be inspected?—No, the children that come from the Association are inspected. There were two children in a home registered under the Infant Life Protection Act, and the Infant Life Inspector went there; she came with me.

901. Then it is simply an objection to taking a child from an unmarried parent?—Yes.

902. Can you give us an idea of how many cases are inspected?—I could not tell you a definite number,

5 March, 1908.]

Miss FITZGERALD-KENNEY.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

number, but I often have to go back to the cases, and go back to the Unions; some cases I go to two or three times if a question arises. But the number of boarded-out children in my district last year was 1,196.

903. But you said, I think, that for the Local Government Board you also went to inspect the homes that come under the Infant Life Protection Act?—Yes, I have inspected practically all.

904. How many have you inspected?—I inspected all the homes last year, and there were 157 cases registered in half Ireland. I think, of course, if the Act were more rigidly enforced, there would be more. Perhaps this year we shall have more in Dublin; in fact, I am aware that we shall, but I have not my returns yet.

905. That is something under 200 at any rate in the South part of Ireland?—Yes.

906. Would you say that there were considerably more one-child cases than two-child cases?—Yes, I would, because a great many of the institutions board out the one-child cases. Orphanages very wisely decide that they will not run into bricks and mortar.

907. Therefore, bringing the one-child cases within the scope of the Act would very largely increase the work of inspection?—It would largely increase it.

908. And it would necessitate the Unions undertaking inspection which do not undertake it at the present time?—But you see the Act is a law that applies all over the country, and the Unions must undertake it now.

909. But you told us that only 26 Unions had taken it up seriously?—Only 26 have enforced the Act rigidly.

910. Because the rest of them have no cases, except one-child cases?—And they have very few of them.

911. But it would of course increase the work of inspection very considerably if the Act was extended as is suggested?—It would not appreciably increase it I think; because whether they inspect 100 or 150 children I do not think it is an undue demand upon a person's time.

912. Has much evidence come before you of cases of cruelty in one-child homes?—No, I have very little experience of cruelty. Our people

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

neglect the children through want of cleanliness, and perhaps through drink or something of that kind; but systematic cruelty does not exist.

913. You think, therefore, that inspection is necessary, because of negligence and incompetence?—And ignorance; it is largely due to ignorance.

914. Do you think that the fact that the two-child homes are subject to inspection has diminished the number of two-child homes, and led unscrupulous people to take one child instead of two?—It has not come within my experience. Of course they know the state of the case quite well. I have gone to a house in mistake for the house I was looking for where they have the same name; we have tribes of people with the same name. I have gone to one house, and said: “Where is the baby?” “Oh,” said the woman, “this baby does not come from anybody you have to look after; it comes from so-and-so. I have only one.” I noticed in passing that its eyes were just like red-hot coals. It ought to have been looked after, and I tried to communicate with the people interested in it; but was practically told to mind my own business, that they would do it themselves.

915. Is there much traffic in children in Ireland; do you find advertisements in the papers such as one of the witnesses has told us of, offering to adopt children?—There are such advertisements, but there is not much traffic. We get children sent over to us sometimes from England, passed over—they give bigger sums of money.

916. With regard to the age-limit, does the School Attendance Officer come round in Ireland to look after children at the age of five?—I am sorry to say that we have very little compulsory education; it is not as much, in a great part of the country, as it ought to be.

917. Therefore, there is probably more need in Ireland for raising the age than there would be where the School Attendance Officer looks after his work carefully?—I think so. But my point entirely is, that you cannot get much out of a baby of five. A child of seven can tell you more about itself if people are saying to it, “I got nine pounds to adopt you. You have eaten all that long ago. I wish I had never taken you.”

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Miss WILHELMINA L. BRODIE-HALL called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

918. You have been a Guardian of the Eastbourne Union, I think, for 25 years?—Yes, and perhaps I might also add that I was for 18 years Honorary Secretary of the Association for Promoting Boarding-out throughout England—a London Association, which is now merged in the State Children's Association. That gave me a great deal of experience of boarding out; it was Poor Law boarding out.

919. Are we to take your evidence as that of an individual with great experience, or as the representative of any body, and if so, what body?—I think as my own individual experience, except that my Board are at the back of me, and very warmly at the back of me, and have been for

Chairman—continued.

many years. I have helped all these associations and societies in turn who have given their evidence, but I do not represent any one in particular.

920. You are not formally sent here as some of our witnesses have been?—No.

921. Now perhaps you will proceed to give us what you wish to lay before us. Will you begin by giving your reasons for including the one-child homes within the Act?—My first reason is that the present Act omits from its protection at least one-fourth of the children placed out for hire.

922. Do you base that statement on figures within your own knowledge?—I do; and also I should imagine that you have had that evidence put to you from Manchester.

923. But

5 March, 1908.]

Miss BRODIE-HALL.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

923. But just let us proceed step by step. That is a statement which you make from evidence within your own knowledge?—Yes, which I guarantee. Of course, in different places and at different times it will vary, but I am speaking generally.

924. Can you give us figures in support of the statement?—In Eastbourne 75 per cent. of the children placed out for hire are outside the Act, and in the Manchester and Chorlton Union 70 per cent. are outside the Act.

925. And you think, broadly, that that applies to the whole country?—Yes; and it may be even a worse figure still, because I should like to point out that we only know the number of one-child cases that are placed out which we happen to come across. No one knows, as there is no notification and no inspection enforced, how many are never discovered; therefore I am quite sure that if we say one-fourth of the children only come within the Act we are quite within the limit.

926. What is your next point?—My next point is that an Act which protects only a minority of children, and not all, living under exactly similar circumstances, gives a false impression of safety to the public, who do not discover that an Act exists to protect two children and not one, and they therefore infer that all are being inspected. If you wish for an illustration of that, I can give you one from my own experience.

927. If you please?—A woman well known to me did not report a case of extreme cruelty next door to her, a one-child case, and when I asked her why she did not do so, she said: “Because I know there is an Inspector for these children, because she comes to visit at the end of the street, so I was sure she would find it out in time.” That woman was under the impression that because an Inspector visited at No. 20, where there were three children, she would necessarily find out that there was one child next door being extremely cruelly treated.

928. Will you proceed to your next point?—My next point is that at present the Act cannot deal with cruelty or insanitary conditions unless they are so acute as to warrant the intervention of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or that of the sanitary authority.

929. That follows. What is the next point?—My next point is that the exclusion of single-child cases from the Act has a demoralising influence on the working-classes, and very specially on those who have reasons for ill-treating the children hired out. We must remember, I think, that a good many of these people are in collusion with the mothers, who, we can hardly wonder at it, sometimes would be very thankful to get rid of the burden of the child altogether, and the quiet doing to death does not seem to be much of a sin in the sight of either the nurse or the mother, and there is no doubt about it that it often occurs. I should like to give you three lines of Mr. Benjamin Waugh's evidence on that point. He said: “There is a general idea that a law which protects children where there are two in a house and will not protect them if there is only one, is not a law that it is desirable to enforce.”

930. What is your next point?—My next point

Chairman—continued.

is that the amendment is needed, not merely to prevent gross and intentional cruelty, but to prevent hundreds of children growing up in a state of neglect and starvation which will handicap them for life, and thus render them a burden on the State. Inspection will materially, and it does, assist those nurses who through ignorance only are slowly killing these children. My experience, and I think that of all Inspectors, is, that women who wish to do well by the children are only too glad to avail themselves of help and advice. I have seen that myself over and over again. And I think you must remember that you have not only to consider the children who are being murdered, but the children who are being so brought up as to wholly unfit them for life and self-support when they grow up.

931. You have used a very strong word, “murder.” Can you give us any facts to support it; have there been any cases of murder—I am asking for information—during the last three or four years?—Surely. There have been several cases, which I should be happy to send you.

932. Will you tell us now of your own knowledge?—I could tell you certainly; but they have been reported in the newspapers, and I have not got the cases with me.

933. But you say that within your knowledge there have been such cases?—Distinctly. It was only in August last that one woman was hanged for such a murder, and three a short time previously.

934. Will you proceed to your next point?—My next point is, that consequent upon the exclusion of one-child cases it becomes possible to evade the intention of the Act in three other directions: (1) That any number of children above five may be kept without inspection as long as only one under five is kept; (2) That two children under five may be kept if one is adopted for over £20, and the other taken for a weekly payment; and (3) That a nurse-mother who has been under the Act can, if complained of by the Inspector and threatened with withdrawal of the licence, give up all but one child, and boast that she is free from control, and only conduct cruel enough to warrant police intervention can in any way interfere with her actions. Such cases are constantly reported by Inspectors from all parts of England. The following is an instance: C. M. had three children. Continued neglect caused threatened withdrawal of her licence. She gave up two, kept the eldest till it was five, and then took an infant, and on being informed that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would watch her, left the neighbourhood, taking the children with her; and being outside the Act, there is no legal authority for following her, nor did we know her address.

935. Is that a case which came under your own knowledge?—Yes, it happened in the district of Eastbourne.

936. Have you any other illustrative cases within your own knowledge in Eastbourne of those three methods of evading the Act?—I have several more, but I have not brought them with me.

937. But you state before us that you know of several other such cases?—Yes.

938. Now, will you go to your next point?—My next point is that, once notification is compulsory,

5 March, 1908.]

Miss BRODIE-HALL.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

pulsory, persons of bad character will not even apply for a licence; while the fact of inspection will improve the standard of homes all round. Inspection is approved of even by the chief opponents of the proposed amendment, because the Rescue Societies most carefully inspect all the homes in which they put their children; the children are inspected by the Committee and by the visitors and matrons of homes. They are never free from inspection. My point really here is that the inspection is carefully carried out by Rescue Societies at the present moment, and hence the extremely good condition of such children; but that that inspection applies only to the children of mothers for whom Rescue Societies are working, which, of course, is an infinitesimal number of mothers as regards all England. Those are my reasons for thinking that the Act should be amended.

939. I see in your *précis* you state that there are cases in the Eastbourne Union showing the need of such amendment. Are those included in what you have been saying?—Not at all; they are separate.

940. Will you just briefly run through those cases. How many are there, half-a-dozen?—Yes; I need not take them all. These are all single-child cases as reported by our Inspector. “Case A was reported by the neighbours. I found the child apparently drugged, the foster-mother denied it, and said the child always slept, never cried, and took very little food. The child was so emaciated that I had to remove it to the workhouse, where it woke up and took food; but never recovered, and died three months later. In the next case, B., a boy of weak intellect, was placed with a most undesirable woman, having two daughters at home, both with illegitimate children. This foster-mother was a well-known drunkard. I often saw the boy running about on the coldest days half-clothed, and in rags, looking ill and dirty. I cautioned the woman repeatedly, and then asked the Inspector of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to watch the case. The result was that the house was rather cleaner, and the boy looked better. His own mother is now married, and is living comfortably at Southampton, but refuses to have the boy removed from the undesirable home. I cannot insist on inspection.” I have since had that child removed to the workhouse, but the Inspector had no power to do that. “Case C was reported by the neighbours as constantly heard screaming, and often left alone for hours. The foster-mother would not let me see the child at first, and I had no authority to insist. I called very early one morning—the door was open, and I saw the woman feeding the child on biscuit and much-watered milk. I gave directions as to right feeding, &c., and the woman seemed more agreeable, but on my next visit I heard that husband and wife had had a drinking bout; the baby looked starved to death, the man was out of work, so that the 6s. paid for the maintenance of the baby was all they had to live upon. Soon everything available was pawned, and the children very ill. When all this was reported to the Inspector of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the family fled from Eastbourne, leaving no address.”

941. You have given us those three cases,

Chairman—continued.

which are illustrative, and could be multiplied?—Yes. I should like to say that I have had letters from Miss Susan Bell, the founder and President of the Upwick Vale Rescue Home, Eastbourne, and Mrs. Cannon, matron at the same place, in which they state that they desire strongly an extension of the Act, for the reason that they find that any woman who objects to inspection, is not a desirable foster-mother, and they always refuse to place their children with women who object to inspection.

942. Will you now pass on to the objections of opponents?—It is said that the amendment would prove a hardship to parents of legitimate children. It appears to me, that it is quite absurd to make any difference between legitimate and illegitimate children in this case; for this reason: that the legitimate children who are out at nurse at these homes, are often there for one of three reasons:—Very frequently because the parents are separated, or one of them is in prison through the action of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; and in the case of widows and widowers, they are distinctly only too glad to receive the guarantee of respectability, if they are at a distance, from an Inspector who looks after their children while they are away. I may point out that of the number of children who come under this Act at all, or who would come under it, according to Mr. Spenser of the London County Council, 95 per cent. are illegitimate, and only 5 per cent. legitimate; so that the number affected, even if it were a trifle of a hardship upon them, would be infinitesimal. Then a second objection has been made, that the people who want to give the temporary charge of a child to a friend while they are away for a week's holiday or have to go to hospital for a week or two, would come off very hardly. It appears to me, that that is exactly a case where the compromise proposed by the Poor Law Unions' Association would come in most usefully; and I may add perhaps, what Mr. Craighill did not exactly reply to just now, that the reason why that compromise was suggested (namely, that though notification should be compulsory, inspection should be waived by the local authority in suitable cases) was, because it was meant to apply to such cases as that, and, further, to cases where societies already take great care in inspecting their children, such as the Waifs and Strays and Dr. Barnardo's. The Act does not apply to those societies, and it is most desirable that it never should apply to them; the fact that they inspect already is sufficient. I would even go so far as to say that I would allow any society having an authorised and elected Committee to be a body for whom the inspection should be waived, on condition that they did it themselves and reported the results of that inspection.

943. What have you to say as to the objection about inspection meaning increased cost?—I have very little to say about it, because I consider it wholly unfounded. But first of all, I think no matter what the cost might be, if it did involve cost, the life of the child in its future relation to the State is far more important than a trifle of £20 or £30 a year. But as regards our own Union, I can only say that we have very effectively inspected every child there for £15 a year. In further proof of my opinion I should like to say that Poor Law boarding-out

5 March, 1908.]

Miss BRODIE-HALL.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

boarding-out inspection is 20 times as rigorous, and requires 20 times as high a standard as any inspection proposed under this Act. For the last 22 years, since the first Inspector was appointed—and now there are two or three more—the inspection has never altered the prices in any way whatever.

944. Then we may pass to the next objection, that inspection will result in the despair of mothers. What have you to say with regard to that?—The objection is urged that inspection will result in the despair of mothers, and will send children on the rates. I can only say that all my experience is, that a good mother, usually in service at a distance and not resident near her child where she can look after it, is only too grateful for the supervision of her child; and mothers, on the contrary, who only wish to get rid of the burden do not care what happens, and the result is that the children come on the rates. We have had several children at Eastbourne thrown on the rates, because the mothers, being at a distance and giving no address, ceased to pay, or paid so little that the foster-nurse could not afford to keep the child, with the result that those children are brought to the workhouse, always in such a miserable condition that we hardly ever can save their lives.

945. Then the next objection is that the working-class resent inspection?—With regard to that, I can only say that it is absolutely unjustifiable to make such an objection. I claim my own experience of over 20 years when I say that inspection is literally welcomed, and that the better the nurse-mother, the more eager she is for advice and instruction from the Inspector.

946. You cannot put it more strongly than that?—There is also another reason. Women have often said to me, "If we are inspected by your Inspector, it protects us against ill-natured gossip and accusations of jealous neighbours who would like to take a child, and have not got one." They realise that if the Inspector inspects their house, and approves of their conduct, they are saved from unjust aspersions.

947. Your next note is about the probability of evasion of the Act. Is not that covered by much that you have said?—I think you can evade any Act if you are clever enough, and I cannot imagine that that objection has anything more to do with this Act than with any other Act. I may say that London has probably a larger number of baby-farmers, technically so-called, than the whole of the rest of England put together, and that the single-child cases are almost always the cases which we have to deal with in the country. We seldom get, as you can see from the statistics, cases where there are two children in the country; and cases where three, four or five are kept are almost unheard-of in country places. Then one more objection has been urged, and that is that it will require a very large increase in staff to cope with these cases if they were included. But may I point out that the reason given why the Unions have not hitherto worked this Act effectively is, that it is not worth their while to appoint and pay an Inspector simply to inspect a quarter of the children who they know are hired out in their district, and if all children were brought under the Act it would not necessitate (except perhaps

Chairman—continued.

in London) any increase in the number of Inspectors, where already appointed, but their whole time would be required for purposes of inspection.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

948. I understood you to say that so far as Eastbourne is concerned, 75 per cent. of the children who are placed out at nurse are outside the scope of the Act as it at present exists?—Yes.

949. How do you arrive at the fact with regard to that?—There may be more, but I can certify to that number, because our Inspector, who is a woman, says that she has found by visiting these single-child cases, which she always does where the nurse-mothers do not object—and comparatively few do—that that is the number as compared with those she can insist on visiting. My own opinion is that the number is greater than that.

950. But you have actual figures in your possession, which show that of the total number of children which she visits, 75 per cent. are outside the scope of the present Act?—Yes.

951. Have you any figures to show what proportion of that balance would be brought in by the suggested amendment of the Act?—The whole of them.

952. Not necessarily?—I do not understand you, perhaps.

953. The amendment of the Act, for example, will not deal with single-child cases placed with relatives?—No, of course not. I am not counting those at all. I do not know of a single case of that kind at this moment in our district.

954. But you state that the whole balance of the 75 per cent. would be brought in by the suggested amendment of the Act?—You will not misunderstand me in saying that 75 per cent. is necessarily the exact figure for this Quarter and next Quarter, or that the percentage every Quarter is exactly the same; it varies.

955. You give me that as an average figure?—Yes.

956. How much do the Guardians pay in Eastbourne for boarded-out cases?—We do not allow boarding-out within the Union. We have only two cases within with relatives, in which case we give 4s. We board out all our children without the area of the Union.

957. And how much do you pay in those cases?—We pay 4s., the Local Government Board allowance. At a certain age it is increased to 5s., as allowed by the Order of 1905; and we give clothing, medical attendance and dentistry as well.

958. I understood you to give it as your opinion that the inspection of one-child homes, which presumably would raise the standard of living for the child, would not increase the cost to the parents?—Certainly it would not; why should it? It has never increased it in the very rigorous and most stringent inspection required for Poor Law children, where the home is inspected, first, by the Local Government Board Inspector, and next by the Secretary and every member of the local Boarding-out Committee.

959. And the price has not gone up in single-child cases?—Not one penny.

960. You give it as your opinion that inspection would not send up the price to mothers in these nurse cases?—I am quite sure that it will not.

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5 March, 1908.]

MISS BRODIE-HALL.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

I quite admit that one thing may result from it. You may get a child now placed in a most undesirable and insanitary home probably for 2s. 6d. ; but in a decent home you will not get it placed for that. It will not otherwise make any difference in the price.

Mr. Gulland.

961. I think you said that you knew of cases where there was collusion between the mother and the nurse?—Yes.

962. Is that frequent, in your experience?—It is fairly frequent; I would not like to say very frequent. It is difficult to tell. There are many cases in which a girl finds, and one can hardly wonder at it, that she is greatly troubled by her illegitimate child; it is a burden all her life through. She cannot get into good service through it; and therefore, in the case of girls with bad character and no principle, undoubtedly there is collusion between the mother and the nurse-mother.

963. Do you think that the mother should be required to register the sending of her child to nurse?—That is according to what the Central Authority thinks best. Either the nurse-mother or the mother must do it. I think the nurse-mother should do it.

964. You do not think that the mother ought always to be required to send notice?—It has never occurred to me that that would be necessary. The mother, you see, is often at a long distance from the place where she places her child. I should think that quite half the children placed out in Eastbourne have mothers living in service at some distance—many in London.

965. You think that if the nurse had to register, as a matter of fact she would register and the Act would not be evaded?—I think so. I think it would be more simple to make the nurse-mother notify than the real mother, because the nurse-

Mr. Gulland—continued.

mother dwells in the place and is presumably known.

966. You said, I think, that while you desired registration to be compulsory, you would have inspection voluntary; at any rate, you would allow certain exemptions, such as in the case of Rescue Societies, and so on. Would you have those exemptions put in the Act, or would you have the Local Government Board or the local authority make them?—I would have the local authority permitted to make them within certain very strictly defined limits stated in the Act.

967. You would allow each local authority to make its own exemptions?—Within the limits authorised by the Act. I certainly do not think it ought to be just as they like. My suggestion was to limit it to societies already inspecting their own children, such as the Waifs and Strays, Dr. Barnardo's and such Rescues Societies as have an authorised Committee, if they would undertake to report that they are inspecting. I think some report should be made by those Societies, say annually, that they are inspecting, and whether the cases that they have are satisfactory or otherwise. I am not in the least afraid of Societies who are inspecting their children. I send a number of my children to the Waifs and Strays and to Dr. Barnardo's, and I cannot speak too highly of the care that they take of them.

968. You would suggest that when these Societies are inspecting special cases, no official inspection is necessary?—Certainly; but I think that all exemptions ought to be immediately approved by the local authority.

969. So that the local authority would know of every case?—Yes, that is all I should wish them to do.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Tuesday, 10th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.
Mr. Bright.
Lord Robert Cecil.

Mr. Ellis.
Mr. Gulland.
Mr. Power.
Mr. John Taylor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. EDWARD BEADON TURNER, F.R.C.S., called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

970. I think you are a medical man ?—Yes.
971. Residing in London ?—Yes.
972. Do you come to give evidence to us from your own experience, or in a representative capacity ?—From my own experience.
973. How long a period has that experience covered ?—Over 30 years.
974. In London ?—In London.
975. Have you had a particular kind of experience ?—Particularly with rescue work and with illegitimate children and their mothers at Rescue Homes, when the children have been boarded out, when they have been in Homes, and when they have been with foster-mothers.
976. Then perhaps you will proceed to the points on which you wish to give us evidence ?—First of all, I want to make it quite plain to the Committee that the evidence that I am going to give is about children in single-child homes exclusively.

977. That is all we have referred to us ?—I do not wish to refer in any way to children boarded out or adopted on a lump sum, whether paid down or by a certain number of instalments, or children who have been left with foster-parents, deserted by their mothers, or anything of that sort ; but purely to children boarded out in single-child homes on weekly or somewhat short, fortnightly or so, periodical payments. And I want to point out that from my experience and in my opinion these one-child homes are better for the well-being, both of the children and the mothers, than if the children are brought up under other circumstances.

978. Would you just say what you mean by "other circumstances" ?—In baby-farms or in a workhouse, or where there are two or three children together. By baby-farms, I mean where several children are taken in and looked after by a woman as a matter of business. I wish to confine my evidence to cases where a single child is taken in by a woman. I think that is better for the children, because they are in more natural and in very many cases—in most

Chairman—continued.

cases—more healthful surroundings than if they are collected into farms ; and they do better, in my experience, when they are, if I may use such an expression, mothered by a woman who has no other nurse-children and perhaps none of her own also, than when they are merely looked after in routine by nurse attendants in a Home, or by a woman who takes in several infants as a matter of business.

979. Let me interrupt you there. We are hardly trying in this Committee the case as between the one-child home and the others so much as whether notification and inspection shall apply to one-child homes ?—I quite understand that ; but I am rather trying to put before the Committee the reason why the one-child homes are the best ; and my argument as to what should be best for the children is rather founded on that, because I think, and I hope to show you, that inspection will very materially reduce the number of these homes ; and I want to show the reason why I have formed this opinion is because a child who gets plenty of individual attention is always a good deal more flourishing than one who is left crying during certain parts of the day, and is only looked at, in routine, at intervals ; there is no question about it. Any medical man will tell you that a child that is taken up by its mother or nurse, nursed and tossed about, and attended to in that sort of way, thrives a great deal more than if it should be kept lying in a cradle by itself during the greater part of the day. Then I was going to touch upon the point whether these one-child homes were not better for the mothers also.

980. If you please ?—I consider that these homes are better for the well-being of the mothers, because in very many cases I have found, and I know from my own experience, and I have heard from people who thoroughly know what they are talking about, that a very good influence is brought to bear upon the mothers of illegitimate children in these homes by the nurse-mothers, and this good influence is kept up and prevented from

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

from dying out by the periodical visits or correspondence which are necessary to complete the weekly payments. This is a matter which has been very much impressed upon me during the many years in which I have had anything to do with this kind of rescue work. I also consider that if these homes are brought under the Act and inspected, most, if not all, of the best will be done away with for several reasons. Firstly, because the husbands will not stand inspection. That is a fact that I know, and I could, if the Committee would like it, give them a very typical instance that happened in my own experience. There was a child some years ago who had been in a Home with its mother for some time, and had been ill. The child's illness was of a nature that interested me to a certain extent, and when the child got better, it was sent out to an extremely good foster-mother. I took down the address, and said I should go and have a look at the child, to see how it got on. I went there two or three weeks afterwards, latish in the afternoon; I went in, and the foster-mother, who had seen me at the Home when I looked after the child, was delighted to see me, showing me the child, and expatiating on its beauties, and so on. While I was there examining the child, the husband came in, and he at once got into a furious rage, saying, "I told you, if you took that 'ere kid in, you would have those Inspectors coming here," and he was very angry indeed; he said, "I would never have allowed you to have this 'ere kid, if I thought it meant having Inspectors about here." I told him that I was not an Inspector, but I was the doctor who had seen the child before it came under his wife's care, and then he was perfectly pleasant, and as eager to allow me to see all I wished as his wife had been.

981. That you give us as an illustrative case?—I give you that as an illustrative case. That was a case that actually happened to me a long time ago—some 24 or 25 years ago.

982. A quarter of a century ago?—I should think quite that.

983. Have you any case since that?—I have not had an actual case like that, because I have never been actually in a house, and met the husband; but in that case the husband found me there.

984. Then am I to take it that the one illustrative case you give us is a quarter of a century old?—It is a quarter of a century old, because I have never since then happened to have come across the husbands. I could give you plenty of illustrative cases in which women have refused to take two children; but that was a case that actually happened to me when I went in.

985. Now perhaps you will pass on to the next point?—The husbands very frequently allow their wives to take in a child under these circumstances, as they put it, "to please the wife," and they tolerate it themselves. I have been told this very many times by women, and I know it for a definite fact; the husbands are not particularly keen themselves to have a child, but they do it to please their wives. Then the next thing is that the best of these women who take in children, the women to whom you would like

Chairman—continued.

to entrust them, and the women who have decent homes and would be the best foster-mothers, will not come under the Act if the Act is extended. You throw the onus of registration and notification on the woman, and the woman will not, so far as they have told me in my experience, undertake to become, as one of them put it to me, "an institution" and not "a mother." And in the cases of women who might be in every way eligible and good foster-mothers but are ignorant and illiterate (and in many cases, especially in the East End of London, you have to face the fact that the foster-mother is not a highly educated woman), it would be a very difficult thing for them to do that; they would not be able to fill up the forms and do all the necessary things nearly as well as one might wish. And also a great many women who would otherwise take in children, if they thought they were taking them in under an Act, and with the necessity of registration and consequent inspection, would be afraid of being classed as baby-farmers. That is a thing that I have heard many times—that they did not wish to be a baby-farmer.

986. You need not elaborate that. Let me remind you that you are not the first witness of what I may call your class. We are perfectly familiar with that aspect of the case?—I also think that bringing the one-child homes under the Act would be a failure; because, in the first place, those who want to do wrong would avoid registration and inspection, and if questioned would plead relationship. These nurse-children nearly always, in my experience, call the foster-mother, "Grannie," "Aunt," or "Mother"—it is a thing I have heard many times; and in that way it would be very easy indeed for a woman taking in one child to evade the Act by saying, "This is my daughter's little child," or "My sister's little child." If you have several children of the same age, of course, then it is very easy to be sure that they are not all brothers or sisters or relations; but one child only can easily come in as a relation, and there would be a very great deal of evasion of the Act in that way. And then to enforce the Act there would be very great difficulty and expense; it would practically mean in London—I am not speaking so much of the country, but in London—it would mean that there would have to be a class of detective Inspectors, who would have to be organised at great expense, and their work would be both difficult and unsatisfactory, because the women could very easily, as I maintain, evade the Act by pleading relationship. Then there is another point also. If these single-child homes were inspected, in many parts of the Kingdom the standard required by the Inspectors would be too high. It sounds a curious thing to say, but what I mean is, that the standard would be too high, and the result would be that the prices that would be charged by the nurse-mothers in these properly inspected homes would be a great deal beyond the means of many of the girls who would require them. In a great many cases, if a child were boarded out with a woman who had a family of her own, the home and the establishment, if I may use the expression, good enough for their own children, would not be considered good enough

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

enough by the Inspector for the nurse-child ; the result being that the child would be taken away, and the mother and child forced either into the workhouse or on to the rates. Therefore, for those reasons, I consider that bringing these one-child homes under the Act would not be the best way to deal with the admitted evils of infant mortality and neglect. I may sum up my reasons by saying, first, because it would materially reduce the number of those who appear to be the best appliances for tackling these evils, and would supplement them by inadequate, dangerous and expensive methods, by which I mean baby-farms, the workhouse, workhouse homes and the rates ; and it would also remove a possible means of good influence on the mothers. There is another thing also. Having these homes inspected and thereby reducing the number of them would press very hardly on widows and widowers with children who wish to get them put out while they work, in some cases it would press very hardly upon them indeed ; but that is rather out of my line, because it has not so much to do with health.

987. Do not go out of your line ?—I will say no more about that then. I want next to come to the causes of infant mortality and neglect. There is no question about it that that is the main thing we are all wishing and trying to mitigate as much as possible, and I have had a very large experience of it among the class which is most prone to early death ; I mean illegitimate children. There are many causes for it. I might divide them into what I may call prenatal causes and post-natal causes. The prenatal causes, which result in the child having what I may call a bad start in many cases, depend upon the worry, anxiety, shame and misery—

988. I think I must say that your evidence is going rather largely afield ?—I am trying to point out that the one-child home is the better way of obviating this mortality and neglect than the aggregation into a farm.

989. That we quite understand to be your view ?—Yes ; and I want to point out the reasons why, with illegitimate children principally, the death-rate is so high, namely, that it is not only a question of bad nursing or bad management, although that, of course, is responsible to a great extent ; but it depends a very great deal on the bad start that the children get ; that they are from their very birth ill-fitted to struggle with diseases, because, as I pointed out, of this maternal worry, shame and misery.

990. That is *qua* illegitimacy ?—Yes, I am speaking of illegitimate children, who, of course, are the larger number of children who are boarded out. And also the effect of inherited maternal disease has a great deal to do with it. There is a very large amount of specific constitutional disease which is inherited by illegitimate children.

991. These things are not referred to us, you know ?—I simply say, then, that the illegitimate children get a bad start, from causes existing before they are born ; and, after they are born, ignorance and bad feeding have a very great deal to do with their deaths.

992. They get a bad start, that finishes the matter ?—Yes. Then you do not wish to hear

Chairman—continued.

anything with regard to the causes of infant mortality in addition to the bad start ?

993. Not in the direction you were pursuing as to maternal heredity and so on. We accept it as a fact that illegitimate children get a bad start for reasons that we need not go into ?—I was also going to point out the ways in which ignorance and bad feeding conduce to the death of children. Among legitimate children the death-rate is not so high as a rule, because in many cases they get a better start ; but otherwise the subsequent procedures are very much the same, ignorance and bad feeding kill a large number of them.

994. What is your next point ?—With regard to the aggregation of children. I consider that if the single-child homes are done away with or materially reduced it will be necessary to get children aggregated into farms. You will not get a sufficient number of foster-parents to board them out.

995. You are aware, of course, that there is no provision in the Bill to abolish one-child homes ; it is merely your inference that they would be abolished by inspection ?—My inference is that they would be abolished by inspection, and I am trying to point out to the Committee the evils that will result should they be abolished.

996. You need not dwell upon that. You assert that in your opinion that would be a great evil ?—Yes, and with regard to the aggregation of children, the mortality is always very much greater where you have a large number of children together in a house than if one child, or even two, are in a house brought up together ; because the children that are boarded out into these farms, as a rule, are unhealthy to start with, and then when they are together you get a bad atmosphere, and the climactic conditions of a room with a lot of children are very bad.

997. Really, we are aware of that ?—Then you will take it from me that children that are aggregated do not do as well.

998. We take it upon ourselves ; we know all that ?—All that I wish to impress upon you is that children aggregated in a farm do not do so well as the children that are brought up singly. I should like to give some suggestions as to what, in my opinion, would be better almost than inspection.

999. If you want to lay any constructive policy before us we shall be pleased to hear it ?—That is what I wished to finish up with. In my opinion, what would be infinitely better than inspecting would be an organised system of health visiting, something of the sort that has been started in Manchester, Liverpool and that part of the world : where, when members of a society hear that a child is born, they go and say : "I hear you have a child ; may I tell you how to manage it ?" There would be a very great deal of difference between that and inspection ; it would be the difference between an Inspector and a voluntary visitor. I am perfectly certain that if that could be started instead of inspection, you would not do away with the best class of these single homes. The women would not object, as they never objected to my going to see the children, to someone who had something to do

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

to do with it and came as a guest ; it would be the difference between a guest whom they accept and an Inspector whom they are obliged to have. And I think it could be very easily carried out. I should think in this way the Registration of Births Act would help very much, if there was a Health Visiting Society, or some body of that sort, who could inspect the register, and follow up and see the children that are registered within the 48 hours. They might in that way do an enormous amount of good in preventing bad management. With regard to cruelty, in the whole time that I have had to do with these cases, I have never come across one single case of cruelty in a foster-mother. I have come across cases in which, from ignorance, it has been necessary to remove the children, where they fed them on improper food—pickles and beer—but I have never come across a case of deliberate cruelty among these single-child homes.

1000. That is your alternative policy ?—That is my alternative policy.

1001. Now, I want to ask you two questions. You come before us as an individual witness speaking from an experience of 30 years—a generation ?—Yes.

1002. Over what area has that 30 years' experience extended ?—The cases I have come across have come from all over the Kingdom. I have, at the same time, been seeing girls who have come from Aberdeen, and Devonshire and Cornwall ; but practically they were all in London ; they have been brought up or sent up.

1003. You have been resident in London during that time ?—Yes, all that time.

1004. It is the experience of a London medical man, who has had under his notice a number of cases coming from all over the country ?—Yes.

1005. Can you give us any idea of the number of cases per annum that you have dealt with ?—I have not kept notes or anything like that, and I may be a little inaccurate in what I say ; but for the first years, anyhow, when I did more of this work than I have been doing of late, the number was certainly over 250 or 300 cases a year.

1006. How many were there in 1907 ?—Really I could not tell you.

1007. You can give us some idea : was it 10, or 20 ?—I should think probably between 40 and 50. I have not been doing the work so regularly and systematically lately as I used to do.

1008. I am to take it that the number of cases has diminished during the 30 years ?—No, the number of cases has not diminished, but my work has diminished.

1009. That is what I mean ?—I mean that during the last few years I have not been so actively concerned in it as I was some years ago. I have still been in touch with all the work and doing a certain amount ; but I have not been doing as much as I did when first I began ; I have not had time for it.

Mr. Bright.

1010. I think you said in part of your evidence that you gave that you thought if one-child homes were inspected the price of the nursing of children would go up ?—Yes.

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Mr. Bright—continued.

1011. Can you give any reason why you should think that the price would go up ; because we have had plenty of evidence given to us before you came that there is not the slightest difficulty in getting good foster-parents who are quite willing to take children at 5s. a week, and that they are perfectly satisfied to be inspected, I do not mean by people coming in brass buttons, as the expression is, but by ladies who come round ?—I believe that if an Inspector goes to a house and goes very thoroughly into the whole thing, he may find that perhaps the number of cubic feet is not quite sufficient, and might object to the child being in one room. I am speaking of cases that are very destitute indeed in the East End and that sort of thing, where the Inspector would say, “This is not sufficiently good ; it is not clean enough,” or something of that sort. And the result would be that you would find that the cases in which a relation or a friend of a girl who has come to grief will take her child in for a few shillings a week, less than the 5s., and look after it uncommonly well, will not be considered good enough, and that the 5s. a week that you speak of is a great deal beyond the means of a girl who earns £10 a year as a general servant. That is what I mean. And also, I have heard that women already come and say, “Well, we ought to ask 6s. or 7s. a week ; we are told that that is a fair price.”

1012. But surely it would be an advantage, if inspection took place, that the children should be put into better circumstances than they otherwise would be ?—I would certainly say put the child into the best possible circumstances ; but I look at the practical side of it, at the expense, and the fact that I am sure that so long as you can keep the girl in touch with her child, the natural mother's love and the knowledge that she is responsible for that child, have a very good effect upon her. I should very much prefer that a child was even in a house where you might find a certain amount of dirt under the bed and dirt on the child's face where it was well looked after, rather than that the child should be separated and the mother relieved of her responsibility.

1013. But do you not admit that a good many of these girls who have illegitimate children boarded out never see them again, and their object is very often to get rid of them ?—I allow that a certain number have that object, and I should be particularly wishful to prevent it ; but I know that in many cases these girls to a certain extent are fond of their children, they go and look after them, and are extremely distressed if they do not seem to thrive. I have had girls go and actually fetch their children from the nurse-mother and bring them three or four miles to my house, saying that they were not satisfied with the way the child was going on—was it illness or was it badly looked after ? That is a thing to be encouraged, I am sure, as much as possible.

1014. You are not impressed with what has been often said, namely, that a good many of these unfortunate children are sent away to single-child homes for the purpose of escaping inspection, and perhaps with a very sinister purpose behind that ?—I should not think so. I am speaking, of course, simply from my own experience. I

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10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Mr. Bright—continued.

should think that those cases would be the cases in which a lump sum was paid down, in which it would be to the interest of a criminal nurse-mother to get rid of that child as soon as possible.

1015. Those cases would come under inspection, as proposed?—Yes.

1016. Do you think they should be inspected?—I think that a child which is sent out with a lump sum should most certainly be inspected.

1017. How do you make a difference between the cases?—I consider that when children are sent out at 5s. a week, say, that is a different thing; there is no profit on 5s. a week. A woman will take a child for 5s. a week for love of the child or to occupy her, being a childless woman, or as a favour and to help a friend who may be in a difficulty; but the profit comes in where you get two, three or four children.

1018. One object that I think you stated to this proposition is that evasion could be so often carried out by the foster-parents?—Yes.

1019. Supposing the evasion was occasionally successful, would there not be a much larger number of cases in which there would not be evasion and where the child would be consequently better looked after?—I think myself that in most cases of these good homes where they are taken, inspection would not improve the conditions at all.

1020. But how about the bad homes?—I put the bad homes in two classes: one, where the woman wishes and intends to do wrong, in which case you will find it very difficult indeed to nail her down; and, secondly, where, although she is anxious to do right, she may err from ignorance, in which cases, when the children are boarded out from an institution or an association, or a refuge, or a home, they are looked after, and the children are removed. I have in several cases had to have children removed under those circumstances.

1021. You spoke, I think, of a preferable kind of inspection by health officers?—Health visitors.

1022. But that is inspection, after all?—It is inspection, but it is the difference between an Inspector and a visitor—that is the thing. If a person comes to you and says, "May I come and see you, to tell you and to help you and advise you?" that is very different from a man coming and saying, "Now look here, you have to conform to these rules and regulations, or you will be fined £20 and sent to prison."

1023. Why should you suppose that if this Bill becomes an Act the inspection that it would enforce would be of that objectionable character?—I have heard and known of instances in which it has been so.

Mr. Gulland.

1024. With regard to what Mr. Bright has just been putting to you, you know that where the Notification of Births Act is adopted the notification is compulsory?—Yes.

1025. So that visitation, even the visit of a health visitor appointed by a Town Council adopting the Act, would be of the nature of a compulsory visit?—No, not compulsory; because I should conceive that it would be possible for a person to say, "Thank you; I have had five

Mr. Gulland—continued.

children, and I know exactly how to bring them up. I do not want you to come at all."

1026. But the first visit would be official?—I do not mean official. They have a staff of these health visitors in the north, and they go and inquire of a woman, "May I come?"

1027. But that would be an official visit?—Yes, you may call it official if you like; but it is official without the office behind it.

1028. No, the visitor goes there as deputed by the local authority?—Not the State, but a more or less private institution.

1029. Or by the local authority?—I am not absolutely *au fait* with the rules and regulations in the constitution of these health visiting societies, and I do not know whether it is done by the local authorities or entirely by voluntary effort; but my belief is it is entirely by voluntary effort.

1030. Supposing that in this new Children's Bill there was such an amendment as to the visitation of one-child homes, if that visitation were allowed to be by a rescue society, or a voluntary society of that nature, your objection would vanish?—To a very great extent. The women, I know, do not object to be visited by the matron, as they call her, from a home, and they would not object to be visited by anybody who goes to the home to see them and their children occasionally—like myself. But what they object to is exactly the same as when the School Boards were instituted. There was a most tremendous outcry at the time about Inspectors; but nowadays everybody has grown up and got used to it.

1031. Your Rescue Society is doing that in London, and you have no objection to other parts of the country doing it where it is wanted?—I should object to official inspection anywhere. In a country village, whatever goes on in one house is known all over the place, and there is less need for inspection. I have not had much experience myself of country places, but I have been told so by ladies who work there.

Mr. John Taylor.

1032. One question in respect of lump sums and the question of weekly payment. There is more danger of sinister motives where a lump sum is paid, is there not?—Yes, very much so, I think.

1033. Are there a greater number of cases where a lump sum is paid, or a weekly payment?—I do not know; I should think in all probability the number of weekly payments would be very considerably greater.

Mr. Power.

1034. I take it that the drift of your evidence is, that some sort of visiting or inspection is necessary, but you prefer that carried out by a benevolent society?—I do not think it is necessary in very many cases. If you pick your woman with skill to hand a child over to, I do not think it is necessary. I think that they do very well indeed without.

1035. Where you have no benevolent society, 80 per cent. of these children are boarded out without any visitation?—Yes.

1036. The only other point that I want to ask you

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Mr. Power—continued.

you about, mainly for my own information, it is hardly germane to our Reference, is, whether these foster-mothers have families of their own?—Sometimes they have, and in very many cases they have not.

1037. One other question also for my own information: are these cases in many cases nursed at the breast?—Not if they are boarded out.

1038. They are not at all?—Not if they are boarded out. That was one of the things I was going to talk about.

Lord Robert Cecil.

1039. You told us in your evidence that you knew of several cases where women had refused to take two children, in order to avoid inspection?—Yes.

1040. Could you give me a single illustrative instance of that?—Only the other day I heard of a case. Again, you know I must take this as it was told me.

Chairman.

1041. It is not within your own knowledge?—I did not see it myself. Of course I have not had to do with placing children out.

1042. But any witness might come and say, I have heard so and so?

Lord Robert Cecil.

1043. Then without going into that case, would you tell me the kind of cases you had in your mind when you said that women have refused to take two children?—Where a woman had had a child and done very well with it and was asked, or even on one occasion has come herself and said, “I will take another one,” then, on its being explained to her that by taking two she came under the Act, she has come back again to refuse. In one case that I have in my mind the woman said, “No, I cannot have it; my husband will not have the Inspector coming.” Sometimes the women are asked as a favour to take another child because they have done so well.

1044. We have had a great deal of evidence given to us of women who make a trade of taking single children; we have had evidence of advertisements, and so on, and that those children taken under those conditions are very largely ill-treated. We have had that evidence, whether it is true or not. I want to know how you suggest that kind of case is to be dealt with without some sort of compulsory inspection?—I have not come across any of those cases myself.

1045. That perhaps is the answer. But you have formed no idea. The cases seem to come mainly from the North of England so far as I have heard of them, but I daresay that there are others that I have not heard of?—I should always in a case like that be very careful to try and find out whether it was taken for regular weekly payments or for a lump sum.

1046. At any rate you have no suggestion to offer. You see, I am anxious to get the benefit of your full experience. I do not think your suggestion of health visiting would quite deal with those cases; because if a woman intends to do wrong she evidently would not admit the

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

health visitor?—I do not suppose she would; but I consider that a woman who intends to do wrong should be dealt with by the criminal law.

1047. How are you to find out that they have done wrong?—The health visitor would not come, in the first instance, you see, at all to the foster-parents; the health visitor would come to where the child was born, and then the health visitor would be in touch with the child and in touch with the mother, and would see where the child went, and would very easily be able to report that the child has not gone to a good home, but gone to a woman, say, who drinks, or who has come to grief before.

1048. Even if you knew that, I do not see that you would be much better off?—I think you would.

1049. You would not be able to inspect the woman?—No, you would not be able to inspect the woman, but the health visitor could report to the local authority, or to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Society.

1050. But the Cruelty to Children Inspectors have no right to go into a house?—Have they no right to go into a house?

1051. None whatever, unless there is a breach of the law?—My point is that the health visitor would start with the child *ab initio*, and when the time came that the child was to be boarded out, after the first fortnight or month, would say, “Where is your child going?” “To such and such a place,” and the visitor would say, “I will go and see it there.”

1052. I will not trouble you any more about that. I just want to ask one other question: Is it your evidence that inspection has been a benefit in the case of more than one child, or not?—I have not had much experience where more than one child has been taken in since the Act was passed, for inspection. I have seen several children who have been taken in before the Act who were not inspected at all; but since the Act in my experience I have not seen homes like that.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

1053. Your whole experience has really been with homes and foster-mothers who are either inspected by a Rescue Society or are very carefully selected either by a Rescue Society or by some philanthropic persons?—My principal experience has been with those cases.

1054. You have had practically no experience with the type of home that comes under the purview of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Society?—I have not had a large experience of cases where girls have selected their own foster-parents; I have had a certain amount, but the greater part of my experience has been with children who have passed out of Rescue Homes, and that sort of thing.

1055. And your evidence against inspection under the Act is based on your fear that inspection would diminish the number of one-child homes?—Yes.

1056. It is not an objection to inspection; it is an objection for that reason?—It is an objection because I know that the people to be inspected will not be inspected; they will give up taking in children—

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. TURNER, F.R.C.S.

[Continued.]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

children—that is my fear—and that by so doing the number of these homes will be reduced, and you will have to fly to farms.

1057. But you recognise that inspection by societies for health visiting would be a good thing?—I look upon that as a very much better thing than inspection by officials appointed by the State. As I say, in my experience I have seen very little use for inspection.

1058. You have, as you told me, been acquainted

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

mainly with carefully-selected homes, or homes already inspected?—Yes, and those are the homes which I am afraid would drop out.

Chairman.

1059. Have you any opinion about raising the age-limit?—No.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Miss MARIAN H. MASON called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

1060. You are, I think, Senior Inspector of Boarding-Out under the Local Government Board?—Yes.

1061. And you have occupied that position as Inspector under the Local Government Board since 1885?—Yes.

1062. That is 23 years?—Yes.

1063. You have for 13 years inspected the whole of the boarding-out beyond the Union in England and Wales?—Yes.

1064. And you have been Senior Inspector for 10 years, since 1898?—Yes.

1065. And, of course, you come before us with all the experience that that official position implies?—Yes.

1066. With regard to single-child cases, will you kindly tell us what you have to say?—Under the orders of the Local Government Board, no foster-parents may receive more than two children at a time, unless such children are all brothers and sisters, and then the number must not exceed four. Most boarded-out children are placed out singly, yet I do not find that children placed out singly are as a rule treated very much better, at least than where two or more are together. For instance; last year I found a girl, between two and three, placed out singly with a young couple. The foster-mother had beaten it to such an extent that it was one swollen mass of bruises and weals. I counted 56 distinct bruises between its waist and its heels in the general mass of swelling and discolouration. It was absolutely impossible to count those on its arms, and there were others on its back and shoulders. The woman herself had an illegitimate child of about four years old, living with its grandmother, who would not allow her daughter to have it for fear she should ill-treat it. The boarded-out child had been placed with this young woman by a committee of ladies, who were quite ignorant of her character, and who had visited her and the child frequently, but, not having undressed the child, were ignorant of its condition and treatment.

1067. That is an illustrative case, I gather?—Yes.

1068. Could you multiply that case?—Yes, but they are not so often ill-treated when they are quite young.

1069. I think it would be convenient if you would give us an idea of the number of cases of ill-treatment that come under your observation, per annum, say?—When I first began, 23 years

Chairman—continued.

ago, they were much more numerous than they are at present, because now there are two other ladies, each of whom takes a district, and the children are inspected more frequently, so that they are moved from a bad home more quickly than they were.

1070. Can you give us the number?—No, I never can give figures; besides, I think it is so difficult to say where to draw the line as to ill-treatment or cruelty.

1071. Can you give us no idea?—There are a good many. I had a case of conviction the year before last for cruelty to two very young children. Every year I find one or two very bad cases. I find cases of rough treatment or neglect pretty often.

1072. Am I to take it from you, that with all your official experience you cannot say how many cases there were last year, for instance?—No, I never can say; I never add up the number. I can never add them up, because it is so difficult to draw the line and to say what is actual cruelty and what is not. But I find a good proportion of them.

1073. But you cannot get the proportion without adding the figures?—No; but I do not divide them into classes, so I could not tell you—cases of good treatment, moderate treatment, ill-treatment, and cruelty. It is no part of my duty to tabulate the cases I inspect.

1074. Now we will pass, if you please, to some objections that have been made to the extension of the Act. There has been an objection raised before us by some of the witnesses that the cost would be increased. Have you anything to say on that head?—I do not see how it would increase the cost in the least. I have never yet found that the inspection either of myself or of my colleagues, the newer inspectors, or of the committees of ladies, has ever raised it by one penny. The maintenance charge was raised in 1905, but that was at my own request, because prices had risen and the foster-parents complained to myself and to the two other Inspectors that they wanted more money, so we ourselves, the Inspectors, acted as their mouthpiece and got the money for them.

Mr. Bright.

1075. How much?—A shilling a week more. So that you see in fact inspection raised the price—not the dislike to inspection, but the inspection was of advantage to them.

1076. It

10 March, 1908.]

Miss MASON.

[Continued.]

Chairman.

1076. It has been suggested also that inspection might have a prejudicial effect on an affectionate mother; what do you say to that?—That I am quite sure it would not. I think an affectionate mother would be only too glad to have her child looked after and inspected. For instance; not long ago, during the course of my own inspections, I incidentally found a single child, under two, boarded out by its own mother, in an emaciated and neglected condition. I traced out the mother, caused her to be informed of the facts, and she removed her child. In the country, at least, most of such mothers go to service at a distance and out of reach of their babies, and seldom see them. It would be a great comfort to them to know that someone was looking after their children. It is a very far-fetched conclusion that protection for the infant will be an incentive to immorality, and that the burden of maintenance will be thrown on the rates. That child was certainly not sent back to the workhouse; its mother removed it to another home.

1077. In that case do you suggest that inspection was not resented but welcomed?—No; I do not think the woman liked it.

1078. Will you give us what you think is the inference?—The inference of that case is that the mother was glad of the inspection. I was not speaking there of the foster-mother. The mother was glad of the inspection, certainly, because she moved the child at once. When my friend, the lady who went to see about it, told her about it, she moved her child at once.

1079. Then so far from the mother disliking it, she welcomed it in that case?—The mother certainly welcomed it.

1080. Now, with regard to the objection that inspection would be very much resented, have you anything to say?—I have inspected myself officially for nearly 23 years, and have never yet come across a single case where inspection has been resented, unless there was something wrong, which the foster-parents wished to hide; nor have I ever heard of the inspection of any of the other Inspectors having prevented foster-parents from receiving children. On the contrary, these foster-parents who are doing their duty say that inspection is not only quite right, and is what they would wish done for their own children if they had to leave them orphans: but that it is a protection to themselves against unjust and malicious charges from neighbours. I had a case last year where I defended a woman against such charges—one of the best women I know. She was charged by a neighbour who had ill-treated her children, who had beaten them black and blue, with ill-treating her own. I had undressed that child many times, and inspected it thoroughly, and knew that it was untrue; so that I was able to give it out to everybody that she had treated it very well. The statistics of the Local Government Board show that the year before my appointment, 1884, the number of children boarded out beyond the Union was 1,043. At the date of my appointment as Inspector, 1885, it had fallen to 1,022. It then rose at once to 1,172 the next year, and continued rising steadily until 1898, when a second Inspector was appointed. If the figures have

Chairman—continued.

declined since that date, it is not due to any objection to inspection by the other ladies, but to other causes which I have given in my own annual official reports. It may be urged that the Inspectors of the Local Government Board are specially selected, and that it would not be possible to obtain the services of a sufficient number of women thus qualified; but my experience is that foster-parents make no objection to the inspection of the many and various members of the Boarding-out Committees, although many of these persons are very far from being possessed of any special qualifications. In the case of members of committees, it is impossible for the Local Government Board to require any qualification except that of respectability and social standing sufficiently above that of the foster-parents whom they inspect. On the other hand, I have often had complaints from foster-parents that some of their supervisors do not inspect thoroughly. Of two ladies living in the same district (I am speaking of particular people), Mrs. A. inspects thoroughly, Mrs. B. does not; and the foster-parents praise Mrs. A. to me and complain of Mrs. B.

1081. I think you need not pursue this; you are not so much on your own experience on this point. Now, with regard to London, have you anything to say?—I should say that if no harm has been shown to result from the non-inspection of single cases in London, it is because there has been no inspection to ascertain whether such harm exists. If Walthamstow may be considered London, it may be remembered that, not very long ago, a woman residing there was hanged for the murder of an infant, or infants, whom she had received singly and in succession. This is not my own experience, but merely my memory.

1082. Have you anything to say by way of summing up?—May I say that it is not my experience that good homes are lost by inspection, when motives other than profit influence the foster-mothers. There are many such homes where the official Inspectors are received as the best friends of both foster-mother and child.

1083. Now will you pass to the nature of the inspection. What have you to say with regard to that?—So far, in country districts, the Relieving Officer has generally been appointed Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Acts, because it has been considered that there were not enough cases of more than one nurse-child placed together to warrant the appointment of an Inspector for that purpose alone. In purely rural districts I find little if any objection to the visits of the Relieving Officer; because, indeed, there is not enough feeling against the system of outdoor relief; but in large towns, such as Nottingham, Hull and their suburbs, I have found the strongest objection on the part of the foster-parents to the visits of the Relieving Officer. They do not like their neighbours to see him call, nor is it suitable, or of much use, to send a man to visit infants. The inspection of children, especially of infants, is not a man's work, but a woman's, and is one which a woman only can properly and efficiently carry out. It is impossible that the Relieving Officer, a man, can do the work of such Inspectors under

10 March, 1908.]

Miss MASON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

under the Infant Life Protection Acts as Miss Zanetti, of Chorlton, or Miss Dowling, of Bristol; and it is only such inspection as theirs which can ascertain the actual facts, for it is often necessary to undress a child. A man cannot inspect children thoroughly; a woman can; but if she does not, her inspection is no more valuable than that of a man. I think there would be very little, if any, objection to the inspection of single-child cases if a special woman Inspector were appointed, say, under the County Council, for an area large enough to make it worth while; or if a woman Health Inspector were appointed as the Inspector for smaller and local districts. By this I wish to explain that I do not mean that she should visit merely as health visitor, because the health visitor only visits where she is allowed to inspect voluntarily; but I mean that such a woman should be appointed as an official Inspector, and have authority to inspect; and should inspect in cases where her visits are particularly not wanted—where there is some abuse to conceal. A mere health visitor would be absolutely useless. The Inspector must be fully armed with official authority, and will be all the more welcome for that. She will not then be considered interfering, because it is known that she is attending to her duty. It would, however, be very desirable that there should be one chief woman Inspector for each county, to train the local Inspectors in such methods of inspection as would enable them to find out the facts. It often happens that even a sensible and motherly woman may visit or see a child almost daily, and yet know nothing of its real condition. This has been my constant experience as regards the committees of ladies whose work I inspect.

1084. Then you come before us, with the weight which attaches to your position, to say that in your opinion the Infant Life Protection Act of 1897 should be extended to the homes in which not more than one child is kept?—Most distinctly.

1085. You have answered my question in the affirmative distinctly?—Yes.

1086. Have you anything more to add?—There is one point that I am most anxious about: that there should be no power of exemption where any woman has received more than one child in succession during the course of a year.

1087. You are against exemption of any kind, do I understand?—No, not against exemptions—there must be certain exemptions; but I think that there should be no exemption where more than one child has been received in succession during the course of a year; because those are the worst class of baby-farmers. A second child, and any other subsequently received should be inspected. The worst cases are those where the Act has been evaded by the passing on of children from one woman to another, and where the children have been received not simultaneously but in succession. It is chiefly in those cases that children have been made away with; for no inquiry can be made at present where a woman receives a child and passes it on quickly to someone else. The present Act does not cover these, the worst cases of baby-farms. That is really the one particular thing I wanted to say, and have been anxious to say.

Chairman—continued.

1088. And to emphasise very strongly?—Yes, that where children are received in succession two in a year, I say there should be no exemption. It should not be made permissive but compulsory that they should be inspected.

1089. Now I will take you to the raising of the age-limit. Have you anything to say on that point; are you in favour of it?—Yes, strongly; I should raise it myself to 14 permissively.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

1090. I understand you to say that inspection has in fact raised the price from 4s. to 5s. a week?—No, not the inspection; not a penny has been asked more in consequence of inspection. The Inspectors being the friends of the foster-parents have got the extra shilling for them.

1091. Putting it in another way, as the result of inspection, the price has been raised from 4s. to 5s.?—I do not think so, not, at any rate, in the sense that is meant by the opponents; it is in the very opposite sense from that. The Inspectors wish well to the foster-parents; they are their friends when they are doing right, and we get for them everything that is desirable, that it is proper that they should have.

1092. Is there any profit to a woman taking a child at 5s.?—Yes, if you take it, for instance, in this way. A labourer on 15s. a week (I am not saying that 15s. is the general rule), with a wife and three children, has 3s. per head to spend for everything, clothes, food, house rent, and all the rest. If they take one child in at 4s. or 5s. a week it distinctly raises the whole income of the family.

1093. Therefore, there is profit on the 5s.?—Yes.

Lord Robert Cecil.

1094. Would that be true in London, or in a town, as well as in the country?—Yes. The children you see are not boarded out in London. There are no boarded-out children in London.

1095. But on the question of the price, would it be true to say that they would get any profit out of 5s. for a child in a town?—I should think so.

1096. There is one question I want to ask you of a general character. You say generally, I see, that foster-parents treat the children well?—Yes.

1097. But I suppose it is true to say, is it not, that a child may be treated without any hardship or injustice or cruelty, and yet not be satisfactorily brought up?—Quite so.

1098. It means, I take it, something more than freedom from unkindness to make a happy home for a child?—Yes, certainly.

1099. I only want to get your view. It has been rather put to us by some witnesses that if you introduce official inspection you introduce the official element, and though you may prevent absolute unkindness, you destroy the very best homes, the homes where the foster-mother acts from affection, and so on, in the undefinable necessities for a little child. Do you think there is anything in that, or nothing?—Nothing at all. The Inspector is the best friend of the foster-mothers, as well as of the children, and helps them in their family life, helps them in every way.

1100. You do not think that the introduction of, so

10 March, 1908.]

Miss MASON.

[Continued.]

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

of, so to speak, the official element into the family life would be a bad thing?—I know it is not; I know it is a good thing. I may mention the very last visit, perhaps, that I paid, I paid last week. I always visit a foster-mother who had a child which has now been moved to her daughter-in-law. There is a great affection between that woman and myself—she was very good to the child; she is lying now blind and crippled. I knock at her street door—there is no one to answer, and as soon as I speak she says: "Oh! Miss Mason, come in." She knows my voice, and calls me at once, though she is blind.

1101. You think that there are no people in this country who do object to inspection?—Not one that I have ever found who has been doing her duty. They regard one as their friend. I could not tell you of the many touching instances that one has of that—and the other Inspectors, too—as to the strong attachment that there is between the Inspectors and the family.

Mr. Power.

1102. Do the local authorities largely board out children?—Yes, within the Union.

1103. Then are they boarded out as infants, or at what age?—Within the Union there is no limit to the age. Beyond the Union they may not be boarded out under two years old.

1104. But does the Union board out infants?—Yes, the Union boards out some infants.

1105. Could you tell me, are special Inspectors appointed as a rule by the local authorities?—The children under the local Guardians, under the Union, may be visited by a committee of ladies, in the same manner as they are beyond the Union; that is optional. If not, they are visited by the Relieving Officer and the Medical Officer.

1106. I think we had a witness here saying that as a rule in the majority of cases local authorities had Inspectors under this Act, but that there were a large minority that had not?—Yes, under the Infant Life Protection Act, it is true; I thought you were speaking of the inspection of the Local Government Board.

1107. So that it is not obligatory on local authorities to appoint Inspectors?—If it was obligatory they would have to do it?—Yes; they do not always. I think they leave it to the Relieving Officer, or give him something extra for finding out these cases.

1108. Do your Inspectors go into these single-child homes where they have no right?—I am not an Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act. Under the Local Government Board we have full right to go into every house where the children are. We have lists of all the children sent to us every quarter, and we have full right; and besides, both the foster-mothers and the Committee agree to submit to inspection before they take the children.

1109. How do you reach these one-child homes if there is no inspection?—I am not an Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act. There are two different Acts. The one-child homes that I inspect are all on my list.

1110. What class of case was it you referred to in which you favoured exemption from inspec-

Mr. Power—continued.

tion?—I think there would have to be such exemptions in cases where perhaps a mother dies suddenly and the child is placed out for a few nights and then passed on; it would not be necessary then. It is impossible that such cases could come under inspection.

Mr. John Taylor.

1111. With regard to inspection being resented, you say that you have never come across a single case in your inspection unless there was something wrong that the foster-mother wanted to hide. In your experience have you come across many cases where the foster-mother did wish to hide delinquencies?—Yes, a great many.

1112. Are they numerous?—I should say that I find them wishing to hide things, once a month—perhaps oftener, perhaps once a fortnight.

1113. Are they as numerous as in the two-child homes?—Much the same. In that case I gave you of that one child, the foster-mother told me the child was out; she tried to prevent my going into the rooms; and when I found the child she told me it was somebody else's.

1114. Then in relation to passing a child on from one home to another, is that very common?—I am not an Inspector under the Infant Life Protection Act, but I hear a great deal and read of them in the papers, and from the general interest that I have taken in the subject I should say it is not uncommon.

Mr. Gulland.

1115. You talked about exemptions that you would make, and you mentioned one to Mr. Power; are there any other exemptions that you would make?—I think that when an Inspector has visited a child perhaps once or twice and found that it is all right, I should exempt it then, when it is known to be either with relations or with people who really are good to it; and if there was so much to do that the Inspector had not time to go round to them all; I think she might then leave them out.

1116. That would be exemption after one visit?—Yes, I think so.

1117. Would you allow exemptions in a case where a Rescue Society took special charge of the case?—I think so, in particular cases.

1118. When you were satisfied that somebody was visiting, and the thing was all right?—That is rather difficult to say; because even boarding-out Committees and Rescue Societies are not experts in inspection, and do not find out the treatment of the child always. They believe in good faith that the child is all right. The child I saw in the case I mentioned was under a whole committee of ladies; a lady had visited that child a week before, and had never found out that the child was ill-treated. I should be doubtful.

1119. Would you allow a local authority to make exemptions in its own district?—I would prefer that they were submitted for final consideration to the County Council, because in local districts it is so much a question of interest. Often children are put out for the sake of the foster-parents themselves; and there is also so much fear of offending the neighbours; neighbours will not give evidence, neighbours do not tell when a child

10 March, 1908.]

Miss MASON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

child is ill-treated ; they either do not know, or they do not tell.

1120. Have you any idea how many special Inspectors there are in England under the Infant Life Protection Act ?—No, that does not come within my official duties.

1121. In your boarding-out work have you any difficulty, or do you hear of any difficulty, in finding foster-parents ?—Yes, we do. It is not very easy to find a very large number of homes ; but then when we place children out, boarded out under the official regulations, we require a better standard than we should require when they are merely put out by their own mothers ; it is quite a different thing.

Mr. Bright.

1122. We have had evidence from some witnesses who have come before us, that they think there would be no difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of respectable women who would take single-child cases. What do you think of that ? That is, provided that inspection is enforced ?—I do not think it would make any difference. I think, on the contrary, that you would more

Mr. Bright—continued.

easily find them, because it is a protection to the foster-mother, and a protection to the real mother.

1123. You do not think that if this inspection were enforced, there would be any difficulty in getting relatives to take the children ?—No ; and in fact relatives do not mind inspection. The other day I inspected a child who was with its own grandmother. It was under a new Committee, and it was the first time that I had visited the home ; so I said, “ Does the lady who visits you undress the child and look over the house, and do all the things I have done ? ” and she said, “ I make her.”

1124. Is that an exception ?—No, I always find, when I visit children with relations, that they do not resent it at all. Another grandmother in Norfolk said to me, “ I take the money, and I ought to show I spend it properly.”

1125. I hope there are many like that ?—I think there are a great many.

1126. You mentioned that you and your colleagues had been instrumental in raising the price paid. Do I correctly understand that the price is paid by the authorities ?—It is paid by the Guardians, but distributed by the committee of ladies.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. JAMES COURtenay DOYLE called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1127. You are a member of the Board of Guardians of Newcastle-upon-Tyne ?—I am.

1128. How long have you filled that position ?—Thirteen years.

1129. Do you come here as an individual witness, or do you come here on behalf of your Board of Guardians ?—I come here as an individual witness expressing the feelings of the majority of my colleagues on the Board.

1130. You are not perhaps specially authorised by them ?—Yes, I am authorised officially.

1131. You come to tell us your opinion on that experience as a 30 years' Guardian at Newcastle-upon-Tyne ?—Yes.

1132. What is your view with regard to the extension of the Act of 1897 to one-child homes ?—I am opposed to that.

1133. Then perhaps you will give us your reasons ?—I am opposed to it for this reason, that I am of opinion that it would be resented by those who adopt the one child ; because I believe that the presence of the Inspector would result in alienating the affections of the child from the foster-parent. And that opinion is based upon 30 years' experience as an Industrial Assurance Agent and Manager, when I have had occasion to visit the homes of the working-classes and to notice the taking in of the adopted child, and also watching the child grow up to be man or woman.

1134. You think inspection would be resented ?—Most decidedly so, because the aim of the foster-mother and father is to woo the child into the belief that they are the real father and mother, and I believe the presence of an officious Inspector (and all Inspectors are officious, as a rule) would result in a dual control that would be disastrous to the future of the child.

Chairman—continued.

1135. Will you proceed with what you desire to lay before us as your reasons ?—In the case of a person who adopts a child I hold that more children die from want of knowledge on the part of the mother, however affectionate she may be, want of knowledge of rearing children, than from neglect ; and if the alternative was proposed of inspection, I hold that in a case where the foster-mother adopts one child from pure love of the child and loses it and should apply for a second child, it should be inspected ; and the Inspector should be a lady.

1136. Have you finished with the reasons against the proposal to extend the Act to one-child homes, because let us keep to that first ; you can go on to your constructive proposals afterwards. Have you given us all your reasons against the extension of the Act ?—One of the reasons is in the cases that have come under my own personal notice, the affection displayed by the child when grown up, for its foster-parents. I have known numerous cases, as a member of the Board of Guardians, where an illegitimate child, reared by the mother, and the mother having, of course, given great sacrifice to rearing it, has evaded, on legal grounds, the support of the real mother. I have a case in mind amongst many only last week where a mother came up before us for relief, an old lady, and her son evaded responsibility on the ground that he was her illegitimate child. But I never, in all my experience, came across a case where an adopted child has tried to evade the moral responsibility of supporting an aged foster-mother.

1137. Does that exhaust your reasons against the extension ?—I am opposed to the creation of this new office of Inspectors, because what

I am

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. DOYLE.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

I am inclined to believe is that to create an Inspector means that an Inspector would be inclined to find out faults where there were no faults; that in the homely rearing of the child he would be inclined to fix a higher standard of living than is common in a working-class home. I have always found that in a home the foster-child was the child that was the more beloved than any of the others. I have only come across three cases in the whole of my experience where a mercenary motive predominated. Our Superintendent Relieving Officer in Newcastle-upon-Tyne has had the charge of administering this Act of 1897, and during the ten years he has only had three cases to inquire into.

1138. That finishes your case against extension. Have you any suggestion to make to us?—I have that suggestion to make: that in the case of a mother anxious to adopt a child if the first child should die or be transferred, as sometimes I am told it is, though I never came across a case of it, then I hold that the second child should be periodically inspected, not so much from fear of the mother being cruel, but from the fear of her being ignorant, and that that Inspector should be a lady with some knowledge of child-rearing. That is my proposal. This amendment, if passed, would have a very detrimental effect where poor children, bereft of father and mother, might be distributed amongst the relatives, because in that case you would make them amenable to inspection.

Mr. Bright.

1139. You say, I understand, that you think children suffer more from want of knowledge than from deliberate cruelty?—Yes.

1140. Then I understood you to say that in case a woman had a nurse-child and it died, before she was allowed to have another child there should be inspection?—Yes.

1141. But I understand you object to the appointment of Inspectors?—I object to the appointment of Inspectors for one child.

1142. But if you are not going to have any Inspectors appointed how are you going to have the second child inspected?—In that case the information would reach us through the Registrar.

1143. But you cannot mean that, surely. I cannot understand you rightly to think that a woman should be allowed without inspection to so treat a child either from ignorance or otherwise that it should die, but that before she is allowed to carry on the same thing with the second child there should be inspection. You do not mean that?—I mean that; because my experience of adopted children, and also of young children who are not adopted, is that the mothers are deficient in a knowledge of child-rearing.

1144. But if that is the case, is it not a very important thing that they should be inspected, so as to give the children a chance?—I grant you that; but it would only be in a case where the child died; because it would mean then that if the adopted child died, if the mother went for another child, she would know the penalty she had to pay, and she would take greater care of the first one.

1145. But my point is this: If you object to inspectors for this purpose, there would be no

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Mr. Bright—continued.

Inspector available for looking after the second child?—Yes, I should think so. I hold that the administering of that should be in the hands of the Board of Guardians.

1146. But when they have been in the hands of Boards of Guardians, we have had evidence that the people sent by the Boards of Guardians are just the people who are most objected to by the foster-parents; that they do not like the visits of Inspectors from the Guardians, but probably would not object to the visits of ladies to be appointed by the Local Government Board or the County Council?—That is a matter of opinion. I am only opposed to the creation of another set of officers who would be an expense to the ratepayers.

1147. You stated, I think, in one of your answers that you thought foster-children were treated just as well as the others?—That is my opinion—better.

1148. We have had a great deal of evidence that they are very much worse treated?—That is my opinion. I have only come across three cases where mercenary motives predominated.

Mr. Gulland.

1149. Have you in Newcastle special Inspectors under the Infant Life Protection Act?—No; we have a Superintendent Relieving Officer who is created under that Act, and, I think, gets £1 a year for attending to those cases.

1150. Then how many cases do you have registered in the course of a year?—I could not tell you that, because the Board of Guardians board out children, and those children are inspected, if they are in an out-of-the-way district, every year. A member of the Board of Guardians is told off to call and see how the children are getting on.

1151. I mean under the Infant Life Protection Act; you have no figures about that?—No.

1152. Have you any women Inspectors on your staff?—We have no women Inspectors.

1153. You are not yourself doing any visiting in these cases of either single-child homes or where there are two or more?—No.

1154. The information you give us is from what you see in Committee?—The information I give you is not only from what I see as a member of the Board of Guardians coming before me officially, but from the fact that my business as an industrial assurance manager brings me to the homes of a great many of those children that are adopted, and I see evidence of the bond of affection that there is between the foster-child and foster-parents; and I also see the danger that an officious Inspector would be in breaking that bond.

1155. But if you had a tactful woman visiting?—If we had a tactful woman visiting; but yes, ahem!

Mr. Power.

1156. All ladies are not tactful, you think?—Not all ladies.

Lord Robert Cecil.

1157. There is one passage in your evidence that I did not quite follow. You said that you watched

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. DOYLE.

[Continued.]

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

watched children growing up and observed their affections alienated, did you not?—No, I did not say so. I watched them from their being handed over as adopted children growing up, and have observed how the affections were strengthened by years.

1158. But I did not quite see how that bore on inspection. Do you think their affections would be alienated by inspection?—I believe so.

1159. In what way?—I believe the child, with that keen instinct, would perceive that there was dual control; that the foster-father and mother endeavour to impress on the child that they are the real father and mother, and that the presence of a second partner, the Inspector, would create a dual control that would be disastrous to the child; because we know children are so difficult to control that if they knew they had a second appeal they might become very bad to manage.

1160. Even children under five years of age?
—Even children under five years of age.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

1161. I understood you to say that there had been only three cases in 10 years of trouble occurring in the homes of foster-parents?—Only three cases of inspection.

1162. How many cases have you in Newcastle which ought to be inspected, of homes where more than one child is kept?—Three cases we have had. One of those cases was of theatrical parents.

1163. I do not think I quite understand your evidence. Do you say that there have been only three cases during 10 years where two children have been taken by foster-parents?—Yes, the Act has been practically a dead letter in Newcastle.

1164. Because it has been not enforced, or because there have been no cases in which to enforce it?—Because there have been no cases in which to enforce it.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

The Rev. EMMANUEL BANS called in; and Examined.

Chairman.

1165. You are the Administrator of the Incorporated Society of the Crusade of Rescue and Homes for Destitute Catholic Children?—Yes.

1166. The President of that Society is the Archbishop of Westminster?—Yes.

1167. It is with his approval, and as representative of the Society, that you appear before us?—Yes.

1168. You also represent the Roman Catholics of London, so far as the North of the Thames is concerned?—Yes.

1169. Now, perhaps, you will give us what you desire to say?—My knowledge and experience of boarded-out infants is mostly confined to our own work, which is Rescue Work, and we deal officially (this work is official Catholic work) for the three Counties of Middlesex, Essex and Hertfordshire, and my experience and knowledge are in reference to infants boarded out by our Society, the Incorporated Society of the Crusade of Rescue. We board out infants more or less on the same lines as the Barnardo Home, and Mr. Rudolph's Church of England Waifs and Strays Society. We have boarded out infants since 1901. In the year 1901, we had 27 infants boarded out; in 1902, 56 infants boarded out; in 1903, 41; in 1904, 69; in 1905, 67; in 1906, 113; and in 1907 we had 137 infants boarded out with 77 foster-mothers.

1170. Then your operations have shown a very steady and large increase during those seven years?—As regards the infants, we only board the infants out who are taken by the Rescue Society.

1171. But those figures show a very large increase during those seven years?—Yes. Of those foster-parents 36 were licensed and had more than one infant, and 41 were not licensed and had only one infant. An Inspector, appointed by the Society, devotes the greater part of his time to (*a*) procuring foster-mothers, and (*b*) visiting the foster-mothers and children. Most careful inquiries are

Chairman—continued.

made, and the greatest care taken before a person is appointed a foster-mother. Inquiries are made principally as to the character of the foster-mother, as to the character of the husband (whether his work is constant, &c.), the number and ages of the children in the family, and no child is allowed to remain when the husband is out of work. Every infant is carefully examined by the Medical Officer attached to the head office of the Society, and the Medical History paper carefully filled in before the child is placed with the foster-mother. All boarded-out children are under the care of a Medical Officer appointed by the Society and paid by the Society, and every time an infant is seen by him he marks up the Medical History paper and signs it. The doctor also visits the foster-mothers and infants. Surprise visits are made continually by our Inspector. Whenever there is the slightest ground for complaint, the foster-mother with the infant is ordered to come to the head office and the matter is gone into, and if found to be of minor importance the foster-mother is warned. On a second unfavourable report the child is withdrawn and the foster-mother dismissed. Since we commenced to board out infants in 1901, 11 infants have been removed by us, 10 from five licensed foster-mothers, and one from an unlicensed foster-mother. Of the 10 infants removed from licensed foster-mothers, one was removed on account of positive neglect, two on account of the foster-mother drinking, and seven on account of the surroundings not being to our satisfaction. One was removed from an unlicensed foster-mother for a like reason. Once a year all foster-mothers with the infants meet at the head office, and are inspected by our Medical Officer and myself. The foster-mothers who now take one infant are decidedly of a superior class to those who are licensed. These unlicensed foster-mothers would be unwilling to become licensed, first because the husbands would object,

10 March, 1908.]

MR. BANS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

object, and again, because they themselves would object, as they are not the class willing to submit themselves to official inspection, which is sometimes officious. They have no objection, however, to inspection by anyone appointed by the Society placing the infant with them, and I understand that this is the experience of other Rescue Societies who board out—that there is no objection to inspection of their own agents. To bring all one-child homes under the Act would result in severely hampering the good work done by responsible Rescue Societies and Rescue Workers. We are therefore of opinion that exemption should be allowed, at all events in respect to all infants boarded out by such responsible Societies and workers. It is difficult now to find a sufficient number of desirable foster-mothers willing to take one child only, and if all one-child homes were to be brought under the Act, the difficulty would be greatly increased. I am of opinion that the sole reason which induces a person to become licensed is for gain, and that this motive is either not present, or is very secondary, where only one child is taken. As evidence of this opinion of mine that the unlicensed foster-mothers do not take the children purely for motives of gain, I would mention the fact that whenever I have withdrawn a child from an unlicensed foster-mother for the purpose of placing the child in one of our institutions because it has become of a certain age when it should be withdrawn from the foster-mother, there has generally been a scene on the part of the foster-mother when parting with the child, and in more than one case the foster-mother has become quite hysterical; but this has only happened once when withdrawing a child from a licensed foster-mother.

1172. Then I gather that you answer the question put to us as to an extension of the Act, in the negative; you are opposed to an extension of the Act of 1897 to one-child homes?—I am.

1173. But you qualify that, if I understand you rightly, to a certain extent. You say that your Society are of opinion that exemption should be allowed at all events in respect to all infants boarded out by such responsible Societies and workers?—Yes.

1174. Would an exemption of that kind meet your objection?—Not altogether. I am speaking there of my own knowledge. I think that all one-child homes should be exempt.

Mr. Bright.

1175. That all should be exempted?—Yes, that they should not be brought under the Act.

Chairman.

1176. Is there anything else that you wish to state to us?—It is well to remember, and I think it is not generally understood, that there are three classes of foster-mothers who would not be affected by the extension of the Act to one-child homes for periodical payments, namely (*a*) the foster-mother who takes a single child with a lump sum down, as she is already under the Act; (*b*) the foster-mother who is a relation, as under the Act grandmothers and aunts, brothers and sisters, &c., are exempted, and can therefore take one or more children on weekly payment

Chairman—continued.

without coming under the Act, and (*c*) the foster-mother who finds herself with a child deserted by the parent. The moment the payment ceases the foster-mother ceases to come under the Infant Life Protection Act, because there is no reward. The *one* class of foster-mothers who would be affected by the proposed extension of the Act is the foster-mother who is in receipt of steady periodical payments. Further, in respect to the cases of cruelty and neglect of children in one-child homes which have been quoted, and which are generally quoted, it would be well to ascertain whether these acts of cruelty and neglect were committed by foster-mothers in receipt of periodical payments, or were they cases in respect to which the payment had ceased; because if they are of the latter class (and I believe myself a great many of them are of the latter class), such one-child homes would not come under the Act even if it were extended; so that it would not affect them at all. It may not be generally known that in factory towns, such as Rochdale, a number of one-child cases are taken to nurse during that part of the week in which the mother and father are engaged in the factories.

1177. Are you speaking of your own knowledge now?—I have it in a letter.

1178. Then we will take it that it comes to you from a letter?—It comes to me in a letter. A number of one-child cases are taken to nurse during that part of the week in which the mother and father are engaged in the factories; i.e., from Monday morning to Saturday, but are home again with the parents at the week-end from the Saturday to Monday. A very large number of persons in such factory towns would have to be registered. I think that the alleged ignorance of the poor foster-mother is not to be dispelled by the proposed extension of the Infant Life Protection Act, but more by education and possibly by appointing carefully selected health visitors, and the criminal foster-mother can only be dealt with by the Criminal Law. I also think that bringing all one-child homes under the Act would certainly necessitate a very large increase on the rates.

1179. Your evidence has been founded, of course, upon your experience with respect to an institution, which presumably is a well-managed institution? My evidence is based on that experience.

1180. You do not travel to that sphere respecting which we have had a good deal of evidence before us outside institutions?—I have no actual knowledge, but I have opinions, and I have read a good deal and heard a good deal about them.

1181. Such opinion as you have formed from reading and hearing, is against the proposed extension, I gather?—It is against such extension of the Act.

Mr. Arthur Allen.

1182. I understand that you do very carefully inspect all the homes where you place your children under your Rescue Society?—Yes.

1183. You have very minute inspection?—Very minute.

1184. It is curious that you suggest that inspection is not necessary in the case of children who

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. BANS.

[Continued]

Mr. Arthur Allen—continued.

who do not come under Rescue Societies. If you regard it as so necessary for those children, I do not understand your line of argument?—I should say as regards those children who do not come under Rescue Societies, that they are inspected by the mothers of the children.

1185. But we have been told in evidence that the mothers of the children are often in service at a distance—how can they inspect them?—They go to visit their children.

1186. But a poor mother in service at a distance does not get much opportunity, does she, of visiting her child?—She goes periodically, at any rate. It is a class I consider that do not need inspection.

1187. Have you had any experience of the bad class of homes?—I have not.

1188. We have had it given in evidence, for example, that foster-mothers who used to take two children now only take one, because two children bring them under inspection; have you had any experience in that line?—No, I have not.

Lord Robert Cecil.

1189. You told us that you found that the licensed foster-mother had less affection for the child than the unlicensed foster-mother?—Decidedly.

1190. In the cases of licensed foster-mothers who have not had so much affection for the children, are they cases where they have had more than one child with them?—Yes, more than one child; they are the licensed foster-mothers.

1191. They might be licensed, and yet, in fact, have only one child?—My experience of the licensed foster-mothers is of those who have more than one child.

1192. Might it be that their want of affection was due to the fact that they had several children rather than to the fact that they were licensed and inspected?—I think it is for two reasons. It may be because they have more than one child, but I think it is because they become licensed in order to have more than one, namely, to get more money, and it is from the motive of gain.

1193. And wherever the motive of gain comes in, necessarily the motive of affection is either absent or lessened?—Either absent or lessened.

1194. Why should the motive of gain come in more if there were official inspection?—Because the single-child foster-parents who take children now, take the children for very much less money in many cases, especially among the poor. I do not think that the wonderful kindness of the poor towards the poor is realised.

1195. I think it is; at least I hope so?—They will take children out of friendship for a small sum; whereas if they were inspected I am of opinion that they would not be willing to take those children for that amount; they would want more money.

1196. We have had a good deal of evidence of this kind given us—that women make it a regular business to take these one-child foster-children, that they advertise, and when they have disposed of one child or sent it away, or the child is dead or gone away, grown up, then they advertise for another, and that it is a trade just as much as

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

baby-farming is, only that it is carried on with a succession of one-child foster-children instead of a number. Do you think that in such cases as that, there ought not to be inspection?—I do not know whether those cases are for a lump sum down.

1197. No; the cases put to us are for a periodical payment as well as for a lump sum down?—Then it would depend upon what the payment was.

1198. A considerable payment?—It might or it might not be.

1199. Do not you think that there ought to be some way of inspecting those children?—I think that the very best Inspectors are the neighbours.

1200. In a big town?—Yes, in a big town, or anywhere.

1201. Would you be content to abolish inspection altogether in baby-farm cases?—No; not in those cases, because the motive is so different.

1202. I suggest to you cases where the motive is the motive of gain. Assuming that such cases exist, do not you think there ought to be inspection then. I am only anxious to get the benefit of your opinion?—I do not know whether to admit that there are such cases; it would be very difficult to prove.

1203. I do not want to press you.

Mr. Pouer.

1204. I am well aware of the excellent work done by the Society with which your name is so honourably connected. I gather from your remarks here that the inspection is very minute and frequent?—Yes.

1205. And you find such inspection absolutely necessary—at any rate, desirable?—Yes.

1206. In parts of the country where excellent societies like yours do not prevail, what inspection is there?—I should say that it is on the part of the mothers of the children.

1207. But you know that sometimes these poor mothers wish to conceal that they have ever had a child, and sometimes they are in very poor circumstances?—I would point out again that my experience is, that those who are willing to take one child only, are of a far superior class to those who are willing to become licensed and take more than one child.

1208. It is largely, then, a question of degree—what sort of inspection there is to be. You would like optional inspection; you think voluntary inspection is desirable?—I think there is a very great difference between the inspection I have mentioned here, and the official inspection that there would be under the Act.

1209. But you think that some sort of inspection, whether by a society or someone, would be desirable?—Yes, but not the proposed official inspection; possibly by the appointment of Health Visitors.

1210. Your operations are principally confined to London, although they are administered in three counties. Are the homes found in the country, as a rule?—No, they are all in the neighbourhood of the Chief Office.

1211. Which makes inspection comparatively easy?—Yes.

1212. I have

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. BANS.

[Continued.]

Mr. John Taylor.

1212. I have only one question to ask you. Do you think that the extension of the Act would lead to a multiplication of foster-parents taking more children, and being a greater incentive to gain?—I think there would be a lessening of the number of persons willing to take one child.

1213. Reliable persons?—Yes, and therefore would increase, possibly, the number of those willing to take two and more children; or it may have this effect, that some other arrangement would have to be made for the care of the children, because a sufficient number of foster-parents could not be found.

1214. Do you think that the extension of the Act to one-child homes would then lead many of these people, who are now free from inspection, to adopt two children, and get more money out of them?—I do not think so, and the evidence that I would give of that is this. I sent round a trusty Agent to each of my unlicensed foster-parents, and I put this question before them. I carefully instructed my Agent that he was to say nothing one way or the other, but merely to say that he had come from me, and to put this question: “A Bill is before Parliament, and if it passes, all persons taking one child for payment will have to be licensed, and subject to official inspection. Would you be willing to be licensed, and submit to such official inspection?” and the answer in every case is, “No.” So that, as it affects our particular Society, it would mean that we would lose every one of our present one-child homes.

1215. And increase the number of houses where there was more than one child?—Yes.

Mr. Gulland.

1216. In the cases where you have one-child homes, do those foster-parents ever have children of their own in addition?—Yes, we carefully inquire as to the number, and if they have some very young children, we will not appoint them.

1217. But they often have children of their own?—Yes, but some may be grown up.

1218. In that case, is the motive for taking an additional child not the motive of gain?—It cannot be at the price.

1219. How many other children would they have?—What can they make out of 5s.?

1220. I do not know; it may be a good deal. But take it in this way: a woman has two or three children of her own, and takes another; what is the motive?—These children are grown up, more or less; they may be 9 or 10, and so on; but we do not place our children where there are other babies or infants—we are very careful about that.

1221. Why would a woman be willing to take them; is it that the mother is so fond of children, that having brought up three or four, she wants to have the joy of bringing up another?—I think that is a motive—a love of children—the maternal instinct.

1222. But not the love of gain?—I think that is very secondary.

1223. But it is there?—It may be there in some cases. I should say that in some cases it is not there at all. In some cases it may be there, but it is very seldom.

Mr. Gulland—continued.

1224. Does your Society have lady Inspectors?—No.

1225. Not at all?—No.

Mr. Bright.

1226. Your Society has no lady Inspectors, you say?—No

1227. Then, how are you able to tell that the children are properly dressed and washed?—I may mention that we board them out up to three or four years of age, and then withdraw them.

1228. But surely children up to three years of age require a certain amount of looking after which neither you nor I can do?—I think that a married Inspector can do it as well as any lady.

1229. I should not like to undertake it: Do not you think it is a much more suitable thing that little children should be inspected by a woman, to see whether they have been bruised or knocked about, or whether they are properly washed and dressed?—I do not see very much in that up to three years of age. Doctors have to do it, and many of the Inspectors under the Infant Life Protection Act are men.

1230. You do not think that on 5s. there can be any object in taking children for gain?—I do not think so. The profit is very small, if there is any.

1231. But, supposing that the average income of the family does not come up to 5s. a week, and you add another child to it at 5s.?—I would never place a child with a family whose income did not go very much beyond 5s.

1232. You carefully select the foster-parents before you send children to them?—Yes.

1233. Do you find any difficulty in getting them?—We find great difficulty in getting those who are willing to take one child only.

1234. And you inspect the foster-parents very carefully after having selected them?—Yes.

1235. Why do you find it necessary to inspect them so carefully?—Because of our responsibilities to so many parents.

1236. But if those selected parents require to be inspected so carefully, is it not rather hard to see why unselected parents should be exempted from inspection?—Not if they are of a superior class.

1237. But how can you secure that they shall be of a high class?—I am of opinion that they are and must be of a superior class, because there is practically nothing to gain by taking one child.

1238. I would like to ask you why you think that other children in houses which have not been selected should not have the advantage of equal inspection with children such as you mention?—Because I think that in the class of persons who undertake the care of one child there is very little danger in placing the children there. There is no motive present of gain to lead them to neglect the children.

1239. You have mentioned Rochdale, a town with which I am familiar, as a place where the children of working people are sent out for a whole week to be nursed?—Yes, from Monday to Saturday.

1240. Have you any personal knowledge of that?—I have that in a letter from the Clerk to the Guardians of the Rochdale Union.

1241. Did

10 March, 1908.]

Mr. BANS.

[Continued.]

Chairman.

1241. Did he give you that letter to be used here?—He wrote it to Lieutenant-Colonel Long, M.P.

1242. We have to be very careful in these Committees how we have letters. Do you put that letter in?—I put that part of the letter in.

1243. You make yourself responsible for it; you desire to read it?—Yes.

1244. Will you read it, please?—"Another thing, too, against the bringing in of one-child cases is that I believe in factory towns, such as Rochdale, a number of one-child cases are taken to nurse during that part of the week in which the mother and father are engaged in the factories, *i.e.*, from Monday morning to Saturday, but are home again at the week-end with the parents. Therefore, if one-child cases are brought in, there should be exemption from registration and inspection of all cases where a child is with parent or parents at the week-end."

1245. Just let me look at that letter, please. (*The Witness handed in the same.*) This is signed by Mr. R. A. Leach, Clerk to the Guardians of the Rochdale Union?—Yes.

1246. And it is addressed to Colonel Long, M.P. I do not see the date?—The date is March 2nd, 1908.

[Chairman—continued.]

1247. Then you put that letter in as part of your evidence?—Yes.

1248. You cannot tell us further whether the Clerk was authorised to write that letter on behalf of the Guardians, or whether he wrote it in his individual capacity?—I cannot tell you that.

1249. That is very important, you will admit. Is it a personal letter or an official letter?—I cannot tell you that. I think it is a letter saying that he would have liked to give evidence, but was not able to come.

Mr. Bright.

1250. I read in this letter that he merely states that there should be exemption from regulation in those cases?—Yes, but if they were not exempted it would mean a very large number of women in those factory towns being under the Act.

Chairman.

1251. It is a little irregular, but the extract, whatever it is, speaks for itself.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Thursday, 12th March, 1908.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Mr. Arthur Allen.

Right Hon. John Edward Ellis.

Mr. Bright.

Mr. Gulland.

Lord Robert Cecil.

Mr. Power.

Mr. John Taylor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. JAMES OLLIS called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

1252. You are, I think, the Chief Officer of the Public Control Department of the London County Council ?—That is so, Sir.

1253. And you have held that appointment since October, 1906 ?—Yes.

1254. The London County Council is the local authority for enforcing in the Administrative County of London the Infant Life Protection Act ?—That is so.

1255. And the work is done through the Public Control Department ?—That is so.

1256. Will you proceed with what you have to say with regard to the single-child question ?—Dealing with the control of a single infant, the Council prior to the passing of the Act of 1897, advocated the extension of the Statute to all single-infant cases. In view, however, of much of the evidence submitted to the Lords Committee, the proposal was abandoned on behalf of the Council; but the Council must be understood to be expressing an opinion solely with regard to London.

1257. You are here, we understand, from the London County Council to express their opinion with regard to the matters referred to us as far as London is concerned ?—That is so.

1258. Perhaps you will bear in mind, in giving your evidence, that we wish you to deal only with the one-child system, raising the age, and London. You have the authority of the London County Council to give your evidence ?—I have.

1259. I put that to you, because of what took place on a previous occasion. Mr. Spencer, who represented the London County Council, came before the Lords Committee in 1896, and gave certain evidence, and then was recalled at the end of the day, and said that he had changed his opinion in consequence of what he had heard in the Committee Room. He threw aside all his first evidence, and changed his opinion. At Question 3073 of that evidence he said : “ I am unable to-day to speak with the authority behind me of the London County Council.” You are not

in that position ?—No, I am not in that position. I should not venture to take up such a position as Mr. Spencer took up on that occasion.

1260. I gather, then, you are clearly authorised ?—I am authorised, and am simply going to give you the experience of the Department. The Council employs three women Inspectors who regularly inspect the infants kept at houses notified to the Council. The senior of those Inspectors has had experience of 600 houses and 2,400 infants. She has had experience of the manner in which single infants are kept, and as to some of these, she has found them kept by nurse-mothers ignorant, indifferent and incapable, and needing supervision and instruction to ensure the proper maintenance of the infants. There are also two male Inspectors, whose duty it is to discover cases of infringement of the Act, and to ensure as far as possible in poor districts a knowledge of the law. They investigate all sources of information as to nurse-infants, search newspapers for advertisements, and keep observation on private lying-in houses. In the last five years these Inspectors have seen 2,700 infants in single homes of the artisan class, half of whom were under one year old. The large majority were kept in clean homes, and appeared well cared for, and by women who, so far as the Inspector could tell, were not partial to inspection. Only in a few of these cases were the infants neglected, and the cases referred to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Legal proceedings were taken in two of these cases.

1261. Can you give us the result of those legal proceedings ?—I believe that conviction followed in each case. In the Inspectors' opinion the objections to inspection were : (a) The foster-parents considered they were doing a kindness to the infant. (b) Landladies objected to official visits. I think that is an important point, because so many of the poor live in houses which are let out in tenements, and may be more or less under the control of some woman who is, as it were, the

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

guardian of the house. (c) The husbands objected to official visits; and (d) The fear of being stigmatised as baby-farmers. I think, in addition, there is another point which weighs with many people—the fact that if a woman takes nurse-infants coming under the Act, in the event of the death of one of those infants she has to notify the Coroner. English people do not like official inspection, especially in matters concerning their private domestic lives. Where capable, tactful and educated women Inspectors are employed to visit the homes, this objection would easily be overcome, and the nurse-mothers would welcome the visits as helping them in the management of the infants. The difficulty is that the Inspector might not have the opportunity of overcoming prejudice; that is, supposing the objections to inspection are as strong as have been described, and in order to avoid inspection, women would have nothing to do with the keeping of infants. The point has been well put by Mr. Rudolph in a letter to the "Times" of the 25th January last, in which he points out the great difference between inspection as a consequence of payment and official inspection under a statute. The letter seemed to me to have such an important bearing on this point that I have brought it down in case you would like to hear it read.

1262. As you have alluded to it, we had better have it?—"Sir, it is quite true, as Mr. Parr points out, that the Waifs' and Strays' Society and the other children's societies who board out, carefully select the foster-parents and inspect the homes. Their methods commended themselves to the Select Committee when the present Act was under consideration, and their homes were expressly exempted from registration and official inspection. The precautions, however, are just those which an affectionate parent would adopt, and are, therefore, not resented. There is a vast difference between the safeguards naturally required by a good father, or by societies acting *in loco parentis*, and the official inspection by Act of Parliament, based on the assumption that foster-parents are cruel and inhuman. The former are welcomed, whilst the latter would deter the best foster-parents from offering to receive children."

1263. You say, I understand, that where capable, tactful and educated women Inspectors are employed to visit the homes this objection—that is, to official inspection—would easily be overcome?—Undoubtedly; that is the experience of the Council.

1264. It is hardly *quâ* inspection, is it; but it is an objection to a particular kind of inspection?—I think the objection is an objection in the abstract. Directly people have any acquaintance with the lady Inspectors of the Council, I am sure any objections to inspection—unless the women were unsuitable—would rapidly disappear. The point I have in my mind is, that there may be an objection which would never be overcome, because people would not give the Inspectors the opportunity of making an impression upon them. The extension of the Act to single-infant cases would result in a large removal of nurse-infants to work-houses. Having regard to the terms of Section 7 of the Act of 1897, no local authority could discharge its responsibilities without removing many

Chairman—continued.

nurse-infants to the workhouse. Except as regards adopted infants, a branch of the question which has its own special evils, the troubles in connection with the weekly payment nurse-infant largely arise out of the poverty of the mother and the ignorance of the nurse-mother. Only in a very small proportion of the cases is the mother able to make the father responsible for the maintenance of the infant, and the money trouble leaves the infant always on the borderland of privation. The infantile mortality generally is a very serious matter.

1265. You need not go at large into infantile mortality; but anything you say with regard to London we shall receive?—I am pointing out here the heavy death-rate among infant life, and especially among illegitimate infant life.

1266. In London?—In London, I have not the information particularly as regards London, because it is only referred to generally in the Registrar-General's Return.

1267. Dealing with the matter shortly, you would say that the infantile mortality is a very serious matter?—It is. It is roughly 127 per thousand, and it is 261 per thousand as regards illegitimate births. There are several considerations which may explain this heavy death-rate. The constitution of an illegitimate infant may be undermined before its birth by many circumstances. The maintenance of an illegitimate infant is borne by the mother or her relatives in the large majority of cases, and there is a lack of means available for its maintenance. If the Returns of the Registrar-General are examined, it will be seen that the death causes, where the illegitimate death-rate exceeds the legitimate, are just such as might be expected to be fatal to illegitimate infant life, having regard to the conditions mentioned above. I have got out for your information a Return from the Report of the Physical Deterioration Committee of the House of Commons.

1268. Do you desire to put it in?—I think you may like to refer to it. [For Return see Appendix.] The calculated death-rate of infants under 12 months at the houses in London coming under the Infant Life Protection Act, during the 12 months ended the 31st March, 1907, was about the same as the death-rate among legitimate infants; but these infants receive exceptional treatment, and the rate is not trustworthy, as considerable movement of the infants occurs, and many may be taken away for treatment and die, and be excluded from this calculation.

Mr. Power.

1269. Does that apply to houses where more than one are kept?—That only applies to cases coming under the Act.

1270. Where two or more are kept?—Yes, or the single infant adopted for an immediate lump-sum payment. A matter of much importance is the finding in and about London of the dead bodies of newly-born infants. Returns presented to the Select Committees on Infant Life Protection show that in the Metropolitan Police districts 276 dead bodies of infants were found in 1870, and 227 in 1895. The mean of these two years gives an average of 251. These cases are reported to Coroners, who would probably hold an inquest

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Power—continued.

in each. A communication was recently addressed to the London Coroners, asking whether the ages of these infants furnished a clue as to whether the bodies had been abandoned by relatives or friends interested in hiding the birth, or by persons who may have taken the infant for reward, and speedily got rid of it so as to make as much profit as possible out of the transaction. The Coroners have been kind enough to give their views, and in the main it would appear that the bodies are those of infants of women secretly confined, and they or their friends adopt this method of disposal in order to preserve secrecy. Very little suspicion of baby-farming arises in connection with these cases.

Mr. Bright.

1271. Are those still-born children?—They are not all the bodies of still-born infants. Many of the bodies are of still-born infants, and some Coroners are disposed to suspect undertakers of getting rid of bodies in this way in order to avoid the payment of fees and other expenses. Sensational baby-farming cases may not have been prevented by the application of the Act to the single infants.

Chairman.

1272. I do not quite understand that sentence?—I mean to say, even with this Act, and with the Act as it is proposed to be amended, it may be that all the baby-farming cases would not have been prevented. The terms of the Act had been violated in some of the cases, and it is difficult to foresee in what manner the law could be strengthened to compel women to notify who are of criminal intent. In one criminal case, the requirements of the law were well known to the woman, as at one time she resided in London, and gave notice to the Council of the keeping of infants. She remained under inspection until her removal to premises outside London. I should rather be disposed to think that the enforcement of the law as it stands, except as regards adoption cases, prevents people drifting into crime; but now and again cases will arise where natural criminal instinct will endeavour to circumvent the law. I think it is unfortunate that there is not clearer evidence of a vigorous enforcement of the law elsewhere than in London and one or two other places. Is there much practical experience behind the condemnation of an Act that has not been generally enforced?

1273. This is rather general?—It is rather general, but it really leads up to what has been done in London. I cannot help thinking that, with a satisfactory adoption section, the law will remedy the evils contemplated by the Select Committee of 1871. Undoubtedly single-nurse infants are at times taken by persons sunk in poverty who catch at any means for subsistence. Dirt, ignorance, helplessness and incompetence often accompany poverty in these cases when the infants fall into a deplorable condition. Such persons should be precluded from taking charge of infants, and with a slight alteration, Clause 3 of the Children's Bill will meet cases of this kind.

1274. By "such persons" do you mean persons who are adopting children?—No, I mean the persons who will take a single infant for a weekly

Chairman—continued.

payment. There is no doubt many women do that who are quite unfitted to have the care of infants, and a slight alteration of Clause 3 will, it seems to me, give power to local authorities to deal with such cases. There are other cases where on account of poverty the payments for maintenance are pitifully insufficient. Unless these latter infants can be taken away to an institution, it is difficult to see how an Infant Life Act can benefit them. The main trouble is that in the weekly payment cases the infants are the result of profligacy in a portion of the population where the parents generally are unwilling to maintain their offspring or the mothers often unable to affix the legal liability for the maintenance of the infant.

1275. Then I gather that your Council, through you, do desire legislation with respect to one-child cases?—Yes.

1276. But not quite of the kind in the Bill?—I would hardly like to say that. There is an impression abroad that the Council is averse to the extension of the Act to the single-infant cases. That is hardly the case. The Council is not against that. The Council would enforce any law which the Committee thought desirable. Then the question arises, will the proposed remedy meet the evil? There is undoubtedly a very distressing element, but I am doubtful if there is not some misapprehension both as to the evil and to the remedy. Given a satisfactory adoption section and an efficient Executive, the untouched evils seem to me to arise from poverty and ignorance, conditions which seriously affect the death-rate among the poor generally. I think, also, that more is expected of the law than the law can accomplish. One witness seemed to think that a local authority should find homes for the infants, while distressing cases cited by another witness were quite outside the limits of the present or the proposed measure. One case of cruelty occurred in connection with children notified to a local authority, but not inspected. The cost and consequence of the proposed remedy have to be considered. If the proposal were adopted, it would be largely disregarded. Offences would be difficult of discovery, and frequent prosecutions would follow. In large towns an immense executive machinery would be wanted. In London nearly 5,000 illegitimate children are born annually. Allowing for cases of improper birth registration and the depletion by death, there may be in London, at any one time, about 15,000 illegitimate children under five years of age. What proportion of these are put out to nurse it is very difficult to discover, but the number must be considerable, and to that number must be added the legitimate children placed out to nurse with neighbours and others. The evidence of Mr. Parr showed that in 2,101 cases of nurse-infants brought to the notice of the Society, 565 were legitimate children. Below a certain level of society there would, in the absence of disadvantages already described, be great advantages from the opportunities of instilling correct views as to feeding, clothing, hygiene, &c.; but above that level, while necessity for such instruction does not arise, there exist valid and natural reasons for maintaining as much secrecy as possible as to parentage. Unless it can

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

be shown that the evil is of such a character that it cannot otherwise be met, attempts to break down the barriers of this secrecy might result in misfortune. If the present limits of the Act were maintained, satisfactory control given over adoption cases, and some machinery established for preventing the appalling rate of infantile mortality generally, real good to the community would result, and out of it might come some means for meeting those cases where the mothers are too poor or too profligate to maintain their children. Then, in addition, I have prepared a short summary of the Council's work under the present Act during the 12 months ended 31st March, 1907. This Return shows that in this period 1,149 infants came under inspection at notified houses and 644 under observation as distinct from official inspection. The Return also shows what a considerable amount of movement occurs with these infants and how many women, after some experience, give up the care of infants. The first four lines show that with about 200 notified women, both at the beginning and end of this period, 372 were under inspection in the year, and that with about 500 infants, both at the beginning and end of the period, 1,150 came under inspection. The numbers fluctuate, and at the present time there are about 250 women notified under the Act. In case the information may be of use to the Committee, I have had an analysis made of the periods the notified women who have given up the keeping of nurse-infants remained subject to the Act as follows:—One month or less, 227; over one month and not more than six months, 225; more than six months, 598; now under registration, 255; making a total of 1,305 women. Some of the women have remained under inspection since 1898, when the present Act came into force, and many others kept infants for very long periods, terminated only by their own deaths. If you will again refer to the summary of the work, you will see certain particulars set out as to the action taken by the Council since the passing of the Act for meeting cases where the lives of infants were in some danger. Twenty-four orders have been issued by the Council for the removal of 53 infants to workhouses. The two following items of information are interesting as roughly indicating the cases where, for a variety of reasons, the Council felt the nurse-mother was not a suitable woman to have the care of nurse-infants. The Act of 1872 gave to local authorities power to refuse registration to unsuitable persons, but this power was not repeated in the present Act. Section 4, however, gives local authorities the power of fixing the number of infants which may be kept in a notified dwelling, and the Council takes advantage of that power to fix one in unsuitable cases, and so place the women outside the operation of the Act.

1277. Then there is another paper with a large number of figures, through which we need not go, which is a corollary?—Yes. And there is another table, which I have prepared, giving a summary of the reasons for the removal of infants to workhouses.

1278. These are tables which arise out of what you have been saying?—Yes. [For Tables, see Appendices.]

Chairman—continued.

1279. With reference. Are we to take it that your Council desire the Act to be extended to the one-child homes, or do not desire it?—They have not been satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to justify the extension of the Act to one-child cases. But, apart from that, they have never expressed an opinion.

1280. They have desired some change in the law?—The Council have always felt that the law has been very defective with regard to the section which protects the adopted infant. The evils that were inquired into by the Committee which sat in 1871 mainly arose in connection with infants adopted for a lump sum. The Act of 1872 utterly failed to protect that child.

1281. We need not go back, because we began with this Committee with the Act of 1897. That is our starting point?—On several occasions the Public Control Committee have expressed strongly the view that that Act does not go far enough to protect the child adopted for a lump-sum payment.

1282. Now I will take you to the second matter referred to us. Do you wish to say anything with regard to the raising of the age?—I do not think that the Council would wish to express an opinion upon that. After the infant is five years old, it comes under the control of the Educational Authorities, and, in fact, in London children of the poor come under the Educational Authority much earlier than at five years.

Mr. Bright.

1283. I think in the early part of your evidence you stated that you were in favour of the inspection of one-child homes?—No. The County Council has not expressed that opinion.

1284. I understood you to say that the Council had never expressed an opinion against it; that it must not be taken that they were against the inspection of one-child homes?—That is for this reason. Some people assume that the Council is against it; but the Council has not expressed an opinion adverse to it, and they have never been satisfied that it is desirable. That is all I wanted to say. The Council has not expressed an opinion adverse to the extension of the Act, as some people seem to assume.

1285. Then your evidence is almost neutral as to the advisability of the inspection of the one-child homes; it is neither one way nor the other?—I think the Council would rather that I took up that attitude as an official.

Mr. Gulland.

1286. You have given us some results about the one-child homes that were now registered, and I gather that in some way these are inspected?—They are not registered. We come in touch with them. We have a staff of five Inspectors. There are three ladies who are constantly engaged in visiting the notified houses. In addition to those, we have two male Inspectors, who are constantly making enquiries throughout London, to find out any people who are breaking the law; and they examine all newspapers for advertisements; and, when they come in touch with any one who is seeking to take infants for hire on, reward

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

reward, and those people are not notified to the Council, the male Inspectors visit them: and, in the course of those enquiries, they have found a large number of women who keep one child only, and so keep outside the Act. To that extent we come in touch with a large number of women, and a large number of infants.

1287. Have you any figures as to the number of children that are taken for a lump sum?—I can give you those. There has been a singular falling-off so far as the Council's experience is concerned. In 1898 we had 10 such cases. I will give you the figures in successive years. They began with 10, 17, 5, 10, 7, 6, 8, 10, 3 and 5; and there has been such a marked falling-off in recent years, that I asked one of the Inspectors his reason for it; and he attributed it to the fact that the Midwives Act of 1902, I think it was, has set up such a control over midwives, that it has resulted in this. The child is retained with the mother for a longer period than was possible under the old condition of things; and, during that period, the mother gets an affection for her child; and, by the time she is able to decide what shall be done with the child, she is unwilling to part with it for a lump sum payment, as happened to a very considerable extent many years ago.

1288. You attribute the falling-off to that?—I think it must be due to that.

1289. Rather than to anything in connection with the Infant Life Protection Act?—I think it must be so; unless it may be that the persistent action of the Council sends more of these adopted cases outside the county. But there is a considerable falling-off in such cases.

1290. You have no record of those sent outside the county?—No, we know nothing of them.

1291. You say in the latter part of the supplementary paper that the local authority have "the power of fixing the number of infants which may be kept in a notified dwelling, and the Council takes advantage of that power to fix one in unsuitable cases, and so place the women outside the operation of the Act." It seems from that, that really the worst cases slip through your fingers?—Hardly that. The Council of course discharges itself, it seems to me, in the only possible way it can of its responsibilities. The woman is an unsuitable woman to have the care of nurse-infants within the meaning of the Act, and the case is not bad enough for it to be handed over to the Society, or for the infants to be removed to a workhouse; and the Council, therefore, takes the only course open to it, of fixing the number of infants which the woman may keep as low as possible. But, although she passes from under the Act, she does not pass from the observation of our officers, because she immediately then comes under the observation of the two male Inspectors, who, so long as she lives in London, or so long as her address is known, keep her under observation to see that she is taking care of the one infant in her charge; and that she does not keep other infants.

1292. She is not under definite inspection?—She is not under such inspection as the notified dwellings.

Mr. Gulland—continued.

1293. Does not it occur to you that that procedure is a strong evidence in favour of the extension of the Act?—I think I would rather answer that in this way. If it did not appear to the Council that there were strong disadvantages, the Public Control Committee would have always recommended the extension of the Act to single-infant homes. It is because of the fact that the disadvantages in their opinion outweighed the advantages, that the Committee has hesitated.

1294. But, so far as that part of the procedure goes, it shows the necessity of inspection of the one-child home?—It shows that the women do not keep to that standard that we like in the notified houses.

1295. It shows also, does it not, that the Council are quite aware of the necessity of some kind of inspection, so that, although not inspected, they are under observation by your officers?—That is so.

1296. And of course if one of the clauses of the Children's Bill can be amended, it would give the Council further power of control to deal with such cases. Do you find with regard to those cases which are under observation, that the foster-parents resent the intrusion of your Inspectors?—I certainly think that wherever the people have become acquainted with our officers, there is no resentment. I am certain of that. I may give a very curious instance of it. We are troubled in London in official matters with people who pose as Inspectors, who have no title to act as Inspectors, and who visit (I find this largely under the general work of the Public Control Department), and represent themselves to be Inspectors, and they cause much annoyance. This happened only a little while ago at one notified house of a woman who had been for years under inspection. It caused her so much distress, that, when she represented the facts to her husband, he said that she should have nothing more to do with keeping nurse-infants. But the woman was a good foster-mother, and the Inspector was able to induce both the woman and her husband to take a different view. I think that goes to show the influence which our Inspectors can exercise.

1297. Even Inspectors have no power at all to enter the houses that are only under observation?—They have not any statutory power.

1298. Then your County Council is doing without the law what this law would enforce them to do if it were passed?—Can you quite take it in that light, Sir? Because under any Act of course there must be a large amount of detective inspection.

1299. In cases that are known to you as being under the inspection of Rescue Societies, what is your procedure?—Many infants are placed out by Rescue Societies in Homes that are under official inspection, where more than one infant is kept, and those infants come under regular inspection.

1300. They are inspected by your Officers as well as by the Rescue Society?—Yes. In addition to that, there is one Society which, I think, makes a point of only placing a single infant out in one home, under the impression that the single infant gets more care than it would have if there were other infants; and the Society asks our Inspectors to go and visit those houses, and the Inspectors visit them.

1301. So

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Gulland—continued.

1301. So far as there are two-child homes that come under the operation of the Act, you make no exception?—No, none whatever.

1302. Even though you are aware that Rescue Societies are visiting?—There is a certain amount of practical exemption. There are several Homes—I am thinking of the Norland Institute for one, and a large Home at Streatham, which is managed by Mrs. Parr—which are regularly visited by our Inspectors; but the inspection is more in the nature of a friendly visit of the Inspector's than in the sense that it is necessary.

1303. Are not those places exempted under the 1897 Act?—Both those come under the Act; because, although they are in a sense not ordinary houses where infants are taken for hire, there is payment made, and they come under the Act.

1304. I am talking of a home where there are two children taken; you make no exception?—No exception whatever, except of course that the Inspector according to the necessities of the case would so adjust her visits. A home where infants were sufficiently well cared for would not be so frequently inspected as a home where the Inspector had much doubt about the ability of the nurse-mother.

1305. Have you any idea of what the opinion of your Committee would be about an exemption in favour of homes visited by Rescue Societies?—I have not; but as an official I should think it would be very difficult to set up such an exemption.

Chairman.

1306. Are you authorised to speak as to that?—I think I should give the same opinion to the Committee, because many of the infants that are placed out by Rescue Societies are not regularly inspected. It would be very difficult for the Council to recognise any differences.

Mr. Gulland.

1307. Even if it made the regulations itself?—I do not think it would be practicable, Sir. There would be this practical difference: that the Inspector herself would realise who were the infants who were in need of the greater amount of inspection and the infants that were in not so much need of inspection, and she herself would make a practical difference.

1308. I notice in the figures that you put in, there are a very small number of children removed to the workhouse under Section 7. Only six last year, and, in the 10 years since the Act came into force, only 53?—53.

1309. That seems a small number?—I think it is a small number, and I do not think there are so many as there were some years ago. I think the experience of London has shown the advantage of an efficient Executive. We began with one Inspector; a second Inspector was added; and then a woman Inspector was appointed 14 years ago, I think; and afterwards two others; and, with the growth of the Inspectorate, so have diminished the offences which have been discovered.

1310. We have had it from several witnesses that if inspection were extended to one-child homes, the probability would be that the number removed to the workhouse would be greater;

Mr. Gulland—continued.

have you any opinion on that?—I am disposed to think that would be the case, because you have to look at that from the point of view of Clause 5 of the Children's Bill: "If any infant in respect of which notice is required to be given under this part of this Act is kept (a) in any premises which are overcrowded, dangerous or insanitary; or (b) by any person who by reason of negligence, ignorance, inebriety or other similar cause is unfit to have its care and maintenance; or (c) by any person in any premises in contravention of any of the provisions of this part of this Act, any Inspector or other person appointed or authorised to execute the provisions of this part of this Act may apply to the local authority for an order directing him to remove the infant to a place of safety until it can be restored to its relatives or be otherwise lawfully disposed of." The clause is going to widen the power of the local authority to act; and if the local authority finds any child kept under conditions coming within that clause, it seems to me the local authority must remove it to a workhouse.

1311. If it was extended to the one-child home without reference to the other provisions of the Children's Bill, do you think that would increase the number?—I think so, because, undoubtedly, single infants are kept in cases under conditions now which the local authority would not approve. We have no power of dealing with them; but, if the local authority came in contact with them with an executive power, that local authority would undoubtedly be compelled to remove some.

Mr. Power.

1312. I presume your Council from time to time have considered the point of the one-child home, but found the *pros* and *cons* so evenly balanced that they declined expressing a public opinion on the subject?—Perhaps I should say that the Council did put forward a Bill—it was the Bill of the Home Office which the Council adopted—advocating the extension of the Act to single infants. When the evidence was heard by the Lords Committee, the reasons against extending the Act to single infants seemed so overwhelming to Mr. Spencer, that he withdrew the proposal on behalf of the Council. At the first opportunity he reported his action to the Public Control Committee, and the Public Control Committee endorsed it, for the reason that it did seem that the objections would outweigh the advantages.

Chairman.

1313. That was 11 years ago?—That was 11 years ago.

Mr. Power.

1314. Every witness whom I have heard, and I think every witness who has been examined before this Committee, favoured visits or inspection of some class or other, and it was merely as far as I remember a question of the class?—I would favour it if it could be done in another way.

1315. How?—I think that the matter may be looked at from the point of view of the Report of the Committee of 1871, which was a most valuable report.

1316. I

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Power—continued.

1316. I would like to ask your opinion whether you can see any practical difficulty, or any necessary clashing between inspection carried on by some of the excellent societies which gave evidence here, and public inspection by a public official?—I do not think there would be any clashing; because if the local authority realised that Rescue Societies were regularly inspecting the infants, the Inspectors of the Local Authority would be largely satisfied with that. That undoubtedly would be the wish of the Council.

Lord Robert Cecil.

1317. Do you think it would be possible to devise any plans, whereby a distinction might be made in respect of inspection between different kinds of one-child homes. We have been told that in a considerable number of cases these children are taken from purely commercial motives, but that there is a class of case where women take one child, not solely from commercial reasons, or indeed probably mainly from commercial reasons. Can you make any suggestion whereby some distinction might be drawn between those two classes?—I think it would be very difficult to draw a distinction.

1318. Do you think that these two classes exist at all?—I think it is very possible. Of course I have read the evidence which has been given to you. I would say in addition to those two, there is, I think, a third kind of case. There is the case of the child born of people in a good position of society, who never under any circumstances comes under need of inspection, and where the disclosure of parentage might result in trouble. I think there are three distinct types of cases.

1319. Could you tell me, in one sentence, what is the main disadvantage of extension. Is it the fear of inspection, or what?—It is not so much the fear of inspection; it is the fear that no executive machinery could reach all the cases that would become subject to the law.

1320. That would only mean that it would not be altogether effective. What is the evil which the Council fear?—I do not know. I think the Council accepted the impression which was undoubtedly conveyed to the Lords Committee of 1896, and they have not expressed a contrary opinion.

1321. Then you said more than once, something about Clause 3 of the Children's Bill—that you think the case of the one-child home might be met by an amendment of Clause 3. What amendment do you contemplate?—If you look at Clause 3, you will see it refers to the power to prohibit people from receiving children, and one of its clauses, I think it is (d), is quite a new one; but it only applies to “an infant in respect of which notice is required to be given under this part of the Act.” If those words, “in respect of which notice is required to be given under this part of the Act,” were struck out, and it applied to any infant, it would undoubtedly be an enormous advantage to the local authority in administering the law.

1322. You would then be able to get at the one child?—We should then be able to get at the one child that is kept under undoubtedly bad

Lord Robert Cecil—continued.

conditions; and there is no doubt there are many instances of that.

1323. Then I understand your Council think, with some such amendment as that, no further provision is really necessary, or, at any rate, that they are not satisfied that any further provision is necessary?—The Council is only looking at it from the experience of London. There is much experience outside London, and I do not think the Council would wish me to express an opinion.

Mr. Allen.

1324. Am I right in saying that the Council, as a whole, has not really discussed this matter since the time of the Lords Committee?—It was brought up subsequently to the Council in a series of recommendations submitted by the Public Control Committee.

1325. At what date?—1904. The Council then submitted a series of recommendations which were subsequently communicated to the Home Secretary.

1326. But with regard to your evidence to-day, the Council expressed no definite opinion either for or against the change?—That is so.

1327. Have you got the terms of the resolution passed by the Council?—I have not brought it with me. I will send it to you.

1328. Then the resolution, in fact, expresses no opinion one way or the other with regard to the change?—No.

1329. It just authorised you to give evidence of the facts within your knowledge?—Yes.

1330. I understood you to say that the objection was rather to official inspection: that there was no particular objection raised by foster-parents to inspection by ladies representing societies, or anything of that kind, but rather to official inspection?—I think it is rather to the idea of inspection.

1331. Is it a fact, within your knowledge, that Boards of Guardians inspect very largely in boarding-out cases?—There is, of course, a difference between inspection which follows payment, and inspection which is not a part of payment. There is a material difference.

1332. That is the point raised by Mr. Rudolf, in his letter?—Yes.

1333. The objection really is to inspection by bodies which do not pay?—Yes.

1334. But I understand you further to say that the Council does, in fact, inspect all the homes in London where the Rescue Societies send children?—If more than one infant is kept.

1335. All the homes within the Act?—All the homes within the Act.

1336. And it is inspection without an objection being raised?—Yes; in fact, the Rescue Societies are very pleased to rely on the assistance of our Inspectors.

1337. Does not that rather tell against your evidence: because the Council does not pay, and yet its inspection is not objected to?—That is inspection of premises of people who willingly come under the operation of the law. They come under the operation of the Act, and are prepared for inspection.

1338. You said something in your evidence about an improved adoption clause?—I was going to

12 March, 1908.]

Mr. OLLIS.

[Continued.]

Mr. Allen—continued.

to mention before that has been a blot both in the Act of 1872 and the present Act—the fact that the law is not sufficient to protect the child taken for a lump-sum payment.

1339. I do not understand what the adoption clause is?—The Act of 1872 entirely failed to protect the infant taken for a lump-sum payment : the Act of 1897 fails sufficiently to protect it.

1340. In what respect?—The later Act of 1897, by Section 5, puts in a money limit of £20, and, if people want to evade the law, it is very easy for them to make representations enabling them to evade it, and it carries no penalty. The only penalty is that the money paid for the maintenance of the child can be forfeited ; but in our experience we have not been able to recover the money because it has been spent.

1341. Do you find that there is objection to inspection by your lady Inspectors, or is the objection rather to the Council's Inspectors?—I do not think objection is ever expressed when our

Mr. Allen—continued.

Inspector has once been to the premises. Where an objection has been expressed I should say it is due to the fact that the woman is a more or less undesirable woman to have the care of infants.

1342. You would say, I suppose, that inspection should, in the main, be done by ladies, and not by male Inspectors?—I am disposed to think that the Act of 1897 almost contemplates lady Inspectors for the inspection of the homes of infants, because you will see Sub-section 5 of Section 3 says : “Any Inspector or other person duly appointed and authorised in writing by or on behalf of the local authority shall from time to time inspect any infants referred to in any notice given under this Act, and the premises in which they are retained or received, in order to satisfy himself as to the proper maintenance of such infants or to give any necessary advice or directions as to such maintenance.” I think, to a very large extent, women are more qualified than men to give that advice.

APPENDIX.

LIST OF APPENDIX.

	APPENDIX No. 1.	PAGE
Paper handed in by Mr. Robert John Parr	- - - - -	90
	APPENDIX No. 2.	
Paper handed in by Miss Frances Zanetti	- - - - -	91
	APPENDIX No. 3.	
Paper handed in by Mr. George Craighill	- - - - -	92
	APPENDIX No. 4.	
Paper handed in by Mr. George Craighill	- - - - -	94
	APPENDIX No. 5.	
Paper handed in by Mr. George Craighill	- - - - -	95
	APPENDIX No. 6.	
Paper handed in by Mr. James Ollis	- - - - -	96
	APPENDIX No. 7.	
Paper handed in by Mr. James Ollis	- - - - -	97
	APPENDIX No. 8.	
Paper handed in by Mr. James Ollis	- - - - -	98

APPENDIX No. 1.

Paper handed in by Mr. *Robert John Parr*.

ADVERTISEMENTS for Child to be Adopted taken from Newspapers during one fortnight, February 3rd—17th, 1908. (Not all Newspapers were examined.)

County in which Papers were Published.	Number of advertisements.	County in which Papers were Published.	Number of advertisements.
London — — —	161	Brought forward	360
Edinburgh — — —	39	Staffordshire — —	3
Yorkshire — — —	22	Warwickshire — —	3
Aberdeenshire — — —	17	Somersetshire — —	3
Gloucestershire — — —	17	Cambridgeshire — —	2
Kent — — —	17	Suffolk — — —	2
Essex — — —	12	Middlesex — — —	2
Surrey — — —	11	Berkshire — — —	2
Devonshire — — —	11	Worcestershire — — —	1
Lancashire — — —	10	Oxfordshire — — —	1
Northumberland — — —	10	Shropshire — — —	1
Hampshire — — —	7	Cumberland — — —	1
Durham — — —	5	Norfolk — — —	1
Antrim — — —	5	Cork — — —	1
Lincolnshire — — —	4	Nottinghamshire — — —	1
Glamorganshire — — —	4	Northamptonshire — — —	1
Sussex — — —	4	Herefordshire — — —	1
Lanarkshire — — —	4		
Carried forward	360	Total — — —	386

It is impossible at present to give the counties in which the advertisers reside, owing to the fact that in many cases replies have to be sent to the newspaper office.

APPENDIX No. 2.

Table handed in by Miss *Frances Zanetti*.

TABLE showing the number of Nurse Children under inspection in the Chorlton, Prestwich, and Manchester Unions, 1898—1901, inclusive, and in the Chorlton Union exclusively, 1902—1907, inclusive.

Year.	Cases of Nurse Children within the meaning of the Act.			Other Cases, not included in the Provisions of the Act.				
	Children in Homes where more than one child was maintained.	"Lump Sum" Cases.	Total.	"Lump Sum" Cases above £20.	"One Child" Cases.	Children in Homes where more than one Child was maintained.	Children nursed by day only or gratis.	Total.
1898	41	2	43	2	231	17	—	250
1899	11	—	11	1	87	10	7	105
1900	65	—	65	4	153	17	13	187
1901	41	7	48	1	84	4	11	100
1902	50	—	50	—	60	—	—	60
1903	47	—	47	1	35	—	5	41
1904	48	—	48	1	40	5	—	46
1905	59	—	59	—	42	6	—	48
1906	49	—	49	—	25	2	—	27
1907	54	—	54	—	38	5	—	43
	465	9	474	10	795	66	36	907

APPENDIX No. 3.

Paper handed in by Mr. *George Craighill*.

LIST OF UNIONS SUBSCRIBING TO THE ASSOCIATION IN 1907.

Abingdon	Burton-upon-Trent	East Ward	Houghton-le-Spring
Alverstoke	Bury	Ecclesall Bierlow	Howden
Amersham		Edmonton	Huddersfield
Ashbourne	Calne	Elham	Hunslet
Ashby-de-la-Zouch	Cambridge	Ely	Huntingdon
Ashton-under-Lyne	Cannock	Epsom	
Aston	Canterbury	Evesham	Ipswich
Atcham	Cardiff	Exeter	Isle of Thanet
Auckland	Carlisle		Islington
Aylesbury	Castle Ward	Falmouth	
Bakewell	Caxton and Arrington	Fareham	Keighley
Banbury	Chapel-en-le-Frith	Faringdon	Kendal
Bangor & Beaumaris	Chard	Farnham	Kensington
Barnsley	Cheadle	Faversham	Kettering
Barrow-in-Furness	Chelmsford	Fordingbridge	Keynsham
Barrow-upon-Soar	Chelsea	Forehoe	Kidderminster
Barton-upon-Irwell	Cheltenham	Freebridge Lynn	Kington
Basford	Chepstow	Frome	King's Norton
Basingstoke	Chester-le-Street	Fulham	Kingston-on-Thames
Bath	Chippenham	Fylde	Kingston-upon-Hull
Bedford	Chipping Sodbury	Gainsborough	Kirkby Moorside
Bedwellty	Chorley	Garstang	Lambeth
Belper	Chorlton	Gateshead	Lancaster
Bermondsey	Cirencester	Glossop	Leeds
Berwick-upon-Tweed	Cleobury Mortimer	Godstone	Leek
Beverley	Clutton	Gravesend and Milton	Leicester
Biggleswade	Colchester	Great Yarmouth	Leigh
Billesdon	Congleton	Grimsby	Leominster
Birkenhead	Cosford	Guildford	Lewisham
Birmingham	Coventry	Guisborough	Lichfield
Bishop Stortford	Cricklade and Wootton Bassett	Hackney	Lincoln
Blaby	Croydon	Hailsham	Liverpool
Blackburn	Darlington	Halifax	London, City of
Blean	Depwade	Haltwhistle	Long Ashton
Bodmin	Derby	Hambleton	Luton
Bolton	Devonport	Hampstead	Lutterworth
Bradford (Yorks)	Dewsbury	Hartley Wintney	Lymington
Bramley	Dore	Haslingden	Macclesfield
Brampton	Dorking	Hastings	Madeley
Brentford	Dover	Hay	Maidenhead
Bridge	Drayton	Hayfield	Maldon
Bridgend and Cowbridge	Droxford	Hemel Hempstead	Malling
Bridport	Dudley	Hendon	Manchester
Brighton	Durham	Henley	Mansfield
Bristol	East and West Flegg	Hereford	Market Bosworth
Brixworth	East Ashford	Hertford	Market Harborough
Bromley	Eastbourne	Hexham	Merthyr Tydfil
Bromyard	East Grinstead	Hitchin	Medway
Buckingham	Easington	Holbeck	Midhurst
Bucklow	East Preston	Holborn	Middlesbrough
Builth	Eastray	Hoo	Monmouth
Buntingford		Horncastle	Mutford and Lothingland
Burnley			

Narberth	Ringwood	St. Thomas	Walsall
Newbury	Ripon	Stafford	Wangford
Newcastle-on-Tyne	Risbridge	Stepney	Wareham & Purbeck
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Rochdale	Steyning	Warmley (Out-Relief)
Newport (Mon.)	Ross	Stockport	Warrington
Newport Pagnell	Rotherham	Stockton	Warwick
Newton Abbot	Royston	Stoke-upon-Trent	Wayland
Newtown and Llanidloes	Rugby	Stone	Weardale
North Bierley	Runcorn	Stourbridge	Wellington (Som.)
Northleach		Strand	Wellington (Salop)
Northwich	Saddleworth	Stratford-on-Avon	Wells
Norwich	Salford	Strood	Wem
Nottingham	Salisbury	Sudbury	Weobley
Oldham	Samford	Sunderland	West Bromwich
Ormskirk	Scarborough	Swaffham	West Derby
Oswestry	Sculcoates	Swansea	West Ham
Partington	Sedburgh	Swindon and Highworth	Wharfedale
Penistone	Seisdon		Whitchurch (Salop)
Penrith	Selby	Tamworth	Whitechapel
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Petersfield	Sheffield	Teesdale	Williton
Pickering	Shepprey	Tenterden	Wimborne & Cranborne
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Pocklington	Shipston-on-Stour	Thetford	Windsor
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Prescot	Southampton	sham	Worcester
Prestwich	South Shields	Truro	Worksop
Reading	South Stoneham		Wortley
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Reigate	St. Austell	Uttoxeter	Wycombe
Richmond (Surrey)	St. Columb Major	Uxbridge	Yeovil
Richmond (Yorks)	St. Faith's		York
	St. George-in-the-East		
	St. Ives		
		Wakefield	
		Wallingford	

APPENDIX No. 4.

Paper handed in by Mr. George Craighill.

SUMMARY of the replies received by the Secretary of the Association of Poor Law Unions in England and Wales up to and including March 23, 1908.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT (1897) (PROPOSED AMENDMENTS).

QUESTION.	REPLY.
1. Is your Board in favour of the proposed extension of the Infant Life Protection Act, 1897, to "one-child" cases, notification being compulsorily, but the Local Authority having power to grant exemption from inspection in suitable case?	1. Yea 201 Nay 18 } 245 No opinion expressed 26 }
2. In how many cases during 1907 did it come to the knowledge of your Board's officers that there had been offences against children in "one-child" cases?	2. 81
3. In how many cases during 1907 were children made chargeable to your Board from "one-child" homes by	3.
(a) foster-parents who could no longer afford to keep a child?	(a) 101 }
(b) persons other than foster-parents through neglect or desertion of a child?	(b) 52 } 184
(c) other causes?	(c) 31 }

APPENDIX No. 5.

PAPER handed in by Mr. George Craighill.

THE ASSOCIATION OF POOR LAW UNIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

5, King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C.,

DEAR SIR,

22nd January, 1908.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1897, AMENDMENT BILL.

As your Board are no doubt aware, this Association has for some years been endeavouring to secure an amendment of the above Act, and for that purpose a Bill has been introduced in every Session from 1901, but without ever coming on for Second Reading.

The Infant Life Protection Act, 1897 (60 & 61 Vict. c. 57), provides by section 2 (1) that "any person retaining or receiving for hire or reward in that behalf more than one infant under the age of five years for the purpose of nursing or maintaining such infants apart from their parents for a longer period than forty-eight hours, shall within the said forty-eight hours give notice thereof to the said Local Authority." By section 5, "any person retaining or receiving an infant under the age of two years on consideration of a sum of money not exceeding twenty pounds down, and without any agreement for further payment, as value for the care and bringing up of the said infant until it is reclaimed or of an age to provide for itself, shall within forty-eight hours from the time of receiving such infant give notice of the fact to the Local Authority."

The proposals in the Association's Bills have been :—

"To bring within the existing Act all cases where one child only is taken in to be nursed for reward ; to do away with the limit of £20 as regards children adopted upon payment of a sum paid down ; to raise the age limit of children within the Act to seven years ; to enable the Local Authority to remove a child within the Act where the person having its charge or the house in which it is kept is unfit or unsuitable, although not so unfit or unsuitable as to endanger the child's health as the present Act provides ; to render persons, adopting children upon payment of a sum paid down and failing to notify such adoption, liable to fine or imprisonment, or to both, as well as to forfeiture of the sum received—the only penalty at present—to require any person having the charge of children within the Act to notify, under penalty of fine or imprisonment, any change of address to the Local Authorities of the districts from which and to which such person moves."

The above proposals have had the support of a very large number of Local Authorities, especially of Boards of Guardians, throughout England and Wales, but there has been an influential opposition to the first of such proposals from certain metropolitan organisations, whose principal grounds of objection to what is known as the "one child" clause appear to be ;—(1) that if the same becomes law there will be very great difficulty in finding suitable homes for the children, illegitimate or otherwise, of persons who for many and various reasons, wish to place a child in the care of a foster-parent, (2) that many respectable people having no children of their own, will not submit to the inspection of their homes by officers of a Local Authority, as they would be compelled to do upon taking in a child for hire or reward in the case of the Bill becoming law in its present form.

Last year a deputation from the Executive Council of this Association was received by Mr. Herbert Samuel, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Home Office, and reasons for the proposals contained in the Bill were then put forward, but in order to meet the objections that had been raised to the inclusion of one-child cases, the deputation suggested to Mr. Samuel, that whilst notification of all such cases should be compulsory, the Local Authority should have power to grant exemptions from inspections in suitable cases.

Mr. Samuel, in reply to the deputation, stated "that the Government intended early in this year to introduce a Bill for consolidating the Acts now in force relating to child protection and offences by children, and that in such Bill the present Infant Life Protection Act would be included with such amendments as might appear suitable, and that, except as regarded one-child cases, the amendments desired by the Association of Poor Law Unions appeared to be non-contentious." He asked for all information in the possession of the Council as to one-child cases to be supplied to him, and promised that the Council's views should have his most careful attention, adding that it appeared that the compromise which had been suggested by the deputation would probably greatly reduce the existing opposition.

Recently, Mr. Samuel has received a deputation of persons representing the existing opponents to the proposals above set forth, and he is reported to have then stated, that in view of the conflict of opinion as to the inclusion of one-child cases, the Government had decided that no course of action would be salutary which was not preceded by fresh inquiry at which the evidence of both sides could be fully stated and impartially weighed. It was therefore proposed to ask the House of Commons at the beginning of the approaching Session to appoint a Select Committee to investigate this apparently single controversial question, viz. :—whether or not one-child homes should be subjected to inspection.

Having regard to the fact that the Association has for so long been seeking to obtain this amendment of the law, and that, with that object they promoted the Infant Life Protection Act (1897) Amendment Bill, the Executive Council have decided that it would be well for them to be prepared to take the initiative by putting forward their case as soon as the Select Committee has been appointed.

The Council will therefore be much obliged if your Board will at its earliest opportunity give an expression of their agreement or otherwise with the proposed "one-child" clause by replying to Question (1) on the enclosed paper.

At the same time the Council will be grateful to receive from yourself replies to the Questions (2) and (3) on the paper.

Yours truly,
HERBERT DAVEY.

The Clerk to the Guardians.

APPENDIX No. 6.

Papers handed in by Mr. *James Ollis*.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1897.

The following figures indicate the scope of the work arising in London under the above Act during the year ended 31st March, 1907 :—

No. of houses under inspection at beginning of year	213
,, additional houses which came under inspection during year	159
,, houses which ceased to be under Act during year	172
,, houses under inspection at end of year	200
,, visits paid to notified houses during year	3759
,, infants of statutory age kept at beginning of year	505
,, „ received during year	644
,, „ under inspection at end of year	504
,, „ notified as removed during year	364
,, „ removed with nurse-mothers from County	33
,, „ removed to workhouse under Section 7	6
,, single infants left in houses which ceased to be under Act	130
,, infants who attained the age of five years while under Act	47
,, infants who died during year	65
,, inquests held on deceased infants during year	5
,, infants under the age of one year during some part of year	513
Death rate per thousand for notified infants of statutory age..	56·5
,, „ under one year of age	126·7
No. of infants notified as adopted during the year	3
,, visits paid to unregistered houses during year	2497
,, infants found in „ „ „	644
 No. of Orders issued for the removal of infants to workhouse under Section 7, since operation of Act	24
,, infants removed under such Orders	53
,, cases in which number has been fixed at one where more than one infant has been notified	76
,, cases in which number has been originally fixed higher and subsequently reduced to one	31
,, cases in which number fixed at one where an adopted infant only is kept	69

PUBLIC CONTROL DEPARTMENT,
31, Spring Gardens, S.W.

SUMMARY of reasons for the issue of orders for the removal of Infants to Workhouses under Section 7 of
the Act, in the County of London.

Registered Number.	Reasons for removal.
115	Two infants improperly kept, and in a manner likely to endanger their health.
125	Foster-mother old and infirm ; dwelling dirty and verminous (2).
195	Five children kept in a dirty and unhealthy condition.
171	Foster-mother had been insane, and there was a liability to recurrence. (Two infants removed.)
221	Owing to failure of payments, infants were in a starving condition. (Two infants removed.)
259	Intemperate foster-mother. (Two infants removed.)
304	Extreme poverty of foster-mother ; no furniture or bedding. (Two infants removed.)
335	Illness and poverty of foster-mother. (Two infants removed.)
389	Unsuitable nurse-mother ; infants neglected. (Two infants removed.)
445	Infants improperly kept while suffering from infectious disease. (Four infants removed.)
542	Infant dirty and poorly nourished. (One infant removed.)
599	Nurse-mother old, feeble, and dirty ; payments in arrears and the infants neglected. (Two infants removed.)
622	Foster-mother poor and ignorant ; infants neglected. (Two infants removed.)
655	Nurse-mother poor ; infants insufficiently fed. (Five infants removed.)
680	Nurse-mother poor and dirty ; infants neglected. (Two infants removed.)
722	Infant very badly neglected. (One infant removed.)
796	Foster-mother intemperate. (Two infants removed.)
840	Infants badly neglected. (Three infants removed.)
875	Foster-mother too poor to maintain infant. (Adopted.)
880	Foster-mother intemperate. (Two infants removed.)
1118	Infants kept under improper conditions ; poor, dirty, and neglected. (Two infants removed.)
1228	Infants neglected ; foster-mother unsuitable. (Two infants removed.)
1235	Infants improperly kept. (Two infants removed.)
1303	Foster-mother too poor to clothe and feed infants properly. (Two infants removed.)

APPENDIX No. 7.

Paper handed in by Mr. James Ollis.

MORTALITY among Legitimate and Illegitimate Infants respectively, in the year 1902.—Average Rates of Death from Various Causes, under one year, per thousand births: (a) in London; and (b) in the Rural Counties:—

Causes of Death.	London.				Rural Counties.			
	Males.		Females.		Males.		Females.	
	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.
All causes	151·2	289·3	118·7	264·1	125·6	190·2	98·8	166·1
Smallpox	·2	—	·1	—	·0	—	·0	—
Measles	4·1	4·2	3·4	6·0	2·9	1·8	2·3	1·5
Scarlet fever	·2	·4	·2	·4	·2	—	·1	—
Diphtheria and croup	·8	·4	·6	·4	·4	·4	·3	—
Whooping cough	6·1	4·2	6·2	8·6	5·2	5·7	5·8	6·6
Erysipelas	·2	·4	·4	·4	·2	—	·3	—
Diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, enteritis	20·6	48·6	16·3	47·9	9·0	14·1	6·3	13·9
Syphilis	1·9	19·7	1·1	9·5	·4	3·2	·5	4·0
Rickets	1·0	4·2	·6	1·7	·5	1·4	·5	1·5
Tuberculous diseases	7·9	18·0	6·5	13·8	4·9	6·4	3·3	6·2
Meningitis, convulsions	13·7	20·6	10·0	20·3	18·7	26·5	13·7	23·0
Laryngismus stridulus	·4	·8	·3	—	·3	·7	·2	—
Bronchitis, laryngitis	13·5	18·0	10·5	17·3	11·8	15·2	10·5	16·8
Pneumonia	17·1	18·5	13·1	17·7	11·4	13·1	7·8	7·7
Diseases of stomach and liver	2·5	4·6	2·6	5·6	2·2	3·9	2·0	2·9
Premature birth	23·1	34·4	17·4	33·7	20·3	30·4	15·9	19·7
Congenital defects	6·4	9·6	4·3	7·3	5·5	3·9	4·2	4·7
Teething	1·7	5·0	1·6	2·6	2·2	2·1	1·6	4·4
Atrophy, &c.	17·2	50·8	12·8	45·7	20·4	41·7	16·9	36·9
All other causes	12·6	26·9	10·7	25·2	9·1	19·7	6·6	16·3

NOTE.—0 indicates that the deaths were too few to give a rate of ·05 per thousand.

APPENDIX No. 8.

Paper handed in by Mr. *James Ollis*.

Text of the Resolution passed by the London County Council on March 10th, 1908. on the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee:—

“That the Chief Officer of the Public Control Department do give evidence as to facts within his knowledge before the Select Committee on Infant Life Protection appointed by the House of Commons.”

EXPENSES OF WITNESSES.

N A M E O F W I T N E S S .	Profession or Condition.	From whence Summoned.	Number of Days Absent from Home, under Orders of Committee.	Allowance during Absence from Home.	Expenses of Journey to London and back.	TOTAL Expenses allowed to Witness.
Ninian Hill - - -	Secretary, Scottish Na-tional Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.	Edinburgh - -	3	3 3 0	5 14 6	8 17 6
James Russell Motion -	Clerk to Glasgow Parish Councel - -	Glasgow - -	3	3 3 0	5 12 9	8 15 9
Franees Zanetti - -	Inspector under Infant Life Proteetion Act.	Manchester -	2	2 2 0	2 17 0	4 19 0
Jesse James Simpson -	Clerk to Guardians -	Bristol - -	2	2 2 0	1 17 0	3 19 0
Joseph Brown - -	Manufaeturer - -	Dewsbury - -	3	3 3 0	2 14 0	5 17 0
Wilhelmina Brodie-Hall -	Spinster - - -	Eastbourne -	2	2 2 0	0 14 0	2 16 0
George Craighill - -	Clerk to Guardians -	Gateshead - -	2	2 2 0	2 12 3	4 14 3
Annie Fitzgerald-Kenney	Inspectoer under Local Government Board, Ireland.	Dublin - - -	3	3 3 0	5 9 8	8 12 8
James Courtenay Doyle	Insurance Agent -	Neweastle-on-Tyne	2	2 2 0	2 10 0	4 12 0
						£53 3 2

R E P O R T

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

TOGETHER WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE,

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

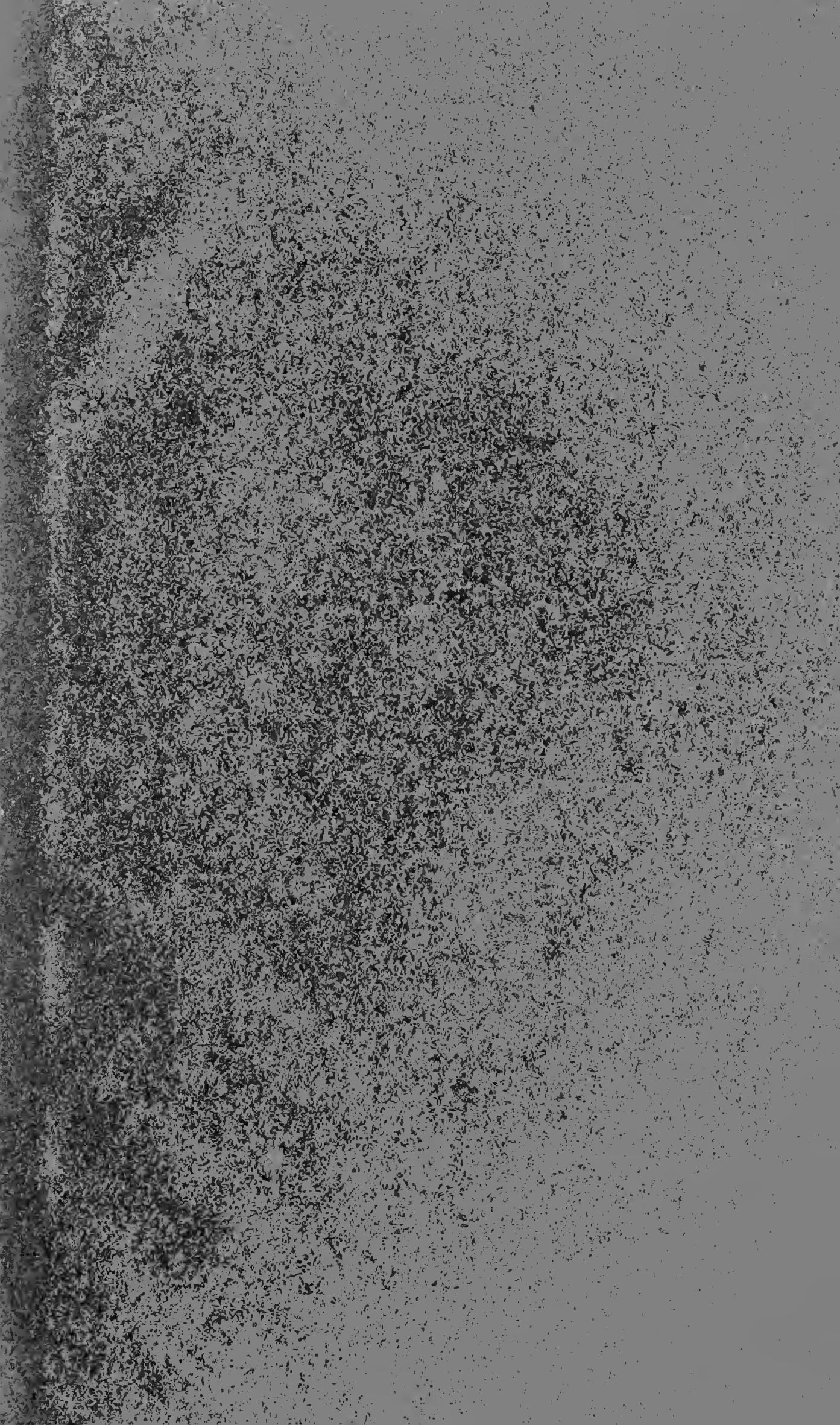
AND APPENDIX.

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed
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